DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 464 238 CE 083 196

AUTHOR	Dhanarajan, Gajaraj
TITLE	Reflections on Ten Years of the Commonwealth of Learning.
INSTITUTION	Commonwealth of Learning, Vancouver (British Columbia).
ISBN	ISBN-1-895369-77-0
PUB DATE	2001-00-00
NOTE	74p.
AVAILABLE FROM	For full text: http://www.col.org/resources/publications/Reflections_10yrs.pdf.
PUB TYPE	Historical Materials (060)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Access to Education; Adult Education; Colleges; Cooperative Planning; Delivery Systems; Developed Nations; Developing Nations; *Distance Education; Educational Cooperation; Educational History; Educational Needs; Educational Resources; Educational Technology; Foreign Countries; Futures (of Society); Global Approach; International Cooperation; *International Organizations; Needs Assessment; *Open Education; *Organizational Development; *Organizational Objectives; Postsecondary Education; Program Development; Shared Resources and Services; Strategic Planning; Technical Assistance; Universities
IDENTIFIERS	Africa; Asia; Canada; *Commonwealth of Learning; Commonwealth of Nations; Information Age; Marginalized Groups; *Organizational History; United Kingdom

ABSTRACT

This document reviews the 10-year history of the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), which is an intergovernmental organization that was created by Commonwealth of Nations heads of government to encourage the development and sharing of open learning and distance education knowledge, resources, and technologies. The following are among the topics discussed in the document's six sections: (1) the challenges facing the COL at its inception; (2) the Briggs and Daniels reports as the impetus for the COL's establishment; (3) major COL activities (creating and developing institutional capacity; developing programs in distance education; providing information and consultancy; supporting staff training and management; establishing communication links; conducting education and applied research; providing access to teaching materials; establishing policies for recognizing academic credit; providing support services to students); (4) the need for open learning and distance education around the world (needs of marginalized groups and people in developing countries); (5) the COL's role in establishing a bridgehead into the information age; and (6) new directions for the COL in a global world (factors likely to increase the importance of open and distance education; selected initiatives to improve delivery of open and distance education; and strategies for the future). (A list of 170 COL publications is appended.) (MN)

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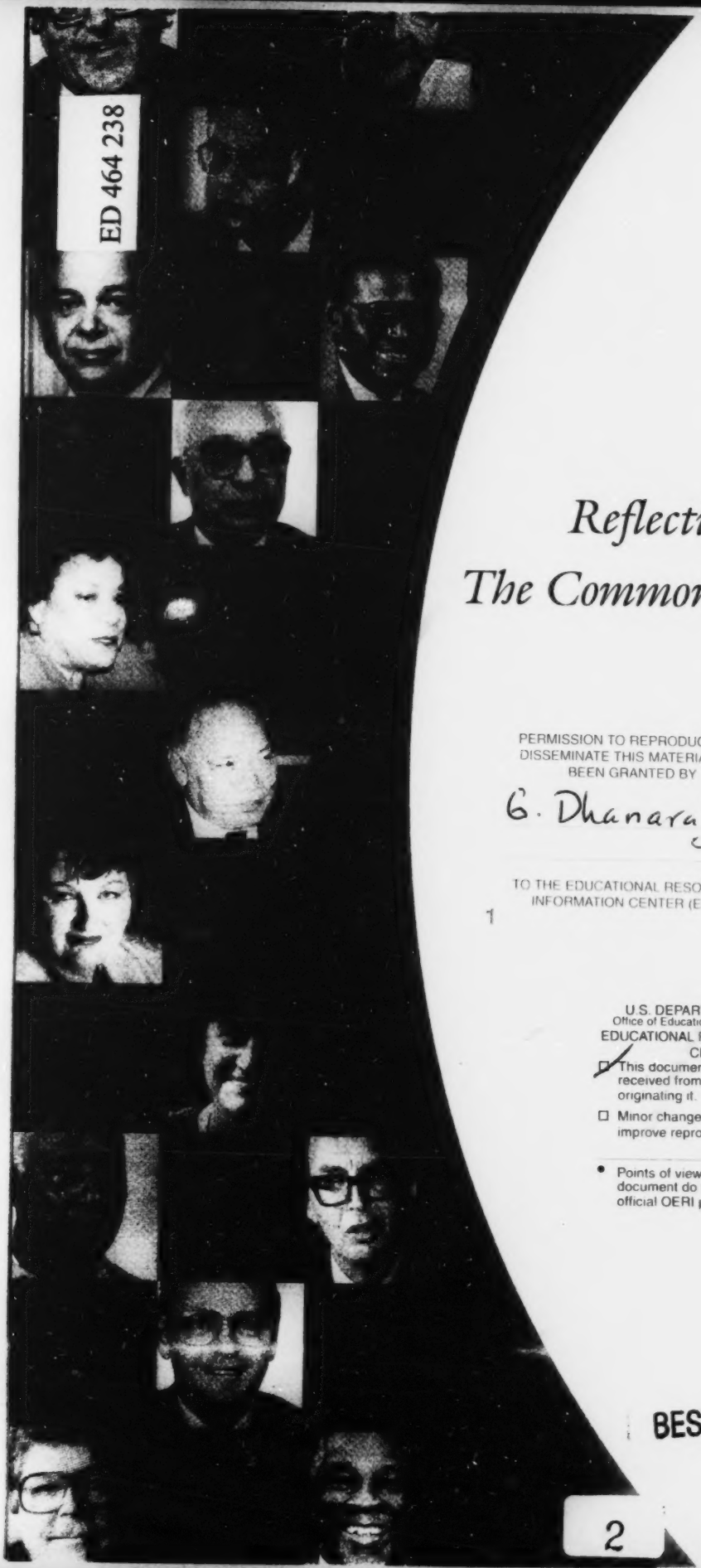

Reflections on Ten Years of The Commonwealth of Learning

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Reflections on Ten Years of The Commonwealth of Learning

Gajaraj Dhanarajan

THE COMMONWEALTH *of* LEARNING

COL is an intergovernmental organisation created by Commonwealth Heads of Government to encourage the development and sharing of open learning and distance education knowledge, resources and technologies.

Reflections on Ten Years of The Commonwealth of Learning
Dato' Professor Gajaraj Dhanarajan

Published by
The Commonwealth of Learning, Vancouver, 2001

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ISBN 1-895369-77-0

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Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the several staff colleagues and Board members as well as the many respected associates involved in distance education and development world-wide who have provided valuable input, advice and technical contributions to the preparation of this document.

Dato' Professor Gajaraj Dhanarajan
President and Chief Executive Officer
The Commonwealth of Learning
September 2001

purpose

The purpose of this document is to reflect and encourage discussions about The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) and its strategic objectives for the ten years beginning July 2000. It draws on COL's experiences since its inception in November 1988 and seeks to build on initiatives taken during COL's first decade and, at the same time, to benefit from global knowledge and experience in the application of open and distance learning in the last five years. Accordingly, *Reflections on Ten Years* is presented in five discrete sections: It starts with *The Idea*, outlining the challenges of inception. That is followed by *The Work*, a description of COL's unique contribution to Commonwealth education; *The Need*, a look at the present state of human development in the Commonwealth; and *The Niche*, which considers the global trends in the delivery of educational services and the use of learning technologies. Finally, *New Directions* discusses the main themes and issues that arise from COL's experiences and global trends, which should be at the heart of its work in its second decade.

This document, and the ideas in it are not meant to be prescriptive. Rather, as a reflection, it is hoped that it will show how COL's productive past will help guide its exciting future.

the idea

It is not often that ideas emerge which stir the imagination and beckon people to work for their fulfilment.

SIR SHRIDATH RAMPHAL
Commonwealth Secretary-General, 1975–1990[1]

Some would say that the invention of the printing press was the beginning of distance education. Others would argue that the mechanics institutes, circulating libraries, correspondence schools, evening classes, folk high schools, summer schools, extramural educational services and many others that have their origins in the 19th century are forerunners of distance education. Hilary Perraton,[2] who nursed the idea of an Open University of the Commonwealth for Co-operation in Distance Education through most of the 1980s, and who eventually saw the acceptance of the idea by Commonwealth Heads of Governments when they met in Vancouver in 1987, says that distance education began in 1963 with the founding of the National Extension College as a pilot for the Open University of the U.K.

While many would disagree with Perraton, very few would deny that distance education as it is known and practised in the Commonwealth today did indeed have its genesis in the successful Open University. In just one decade from the date of its launch by the Labour Government of Harold Wilson,[3] this university was able, through its imaginative and clever use of pedagogical principles and academic product development, to use mass media and technologies along with brilliant marketing to catch the interest of a world attempting to cope with both the huge demand for education and a lack of resources to supply it.

In the world of tertiary education, the 1970s and 1980s were years of tension. On the one side were those who viewed education as a social good, and the global mobility of students an essential part of that good, to be encouraged and subsidised by the public purse. On the other side were those who considered education as simply another public service, which should be offered at subsidised costs to nationals and at full costs to non-nationals. Those were also the years during which developing economies were getting even poorer and the developed economies more protectionist. One impact of this tension and economic trend was a dramatic downturn in the movement of students between Commonwealth countries. This downturn caused serious concern for those who cherished and nurtured the Commonwealth. Education, more than any other factor, was the glue that held the Commonwealth together.[4]

One solution that emerged during the crisis was both simple and elegant. If it was too expensive to move learners to sources of knowledge, why not try moving

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1. Shridath Ramphal in *Towards a Commonwealth of Learning, Report of the Expert Group on Commonwealth Co-operation in Distance Education and Open Learning* (London: Commonwealth Secretariat, 1987).
2. Hilary Perraton, *Open and Distance Learning in the Developing World* (London: Routledge, 2000).
3. *The Open University: Report of the Planning Committee to the Secretary of State for Education and Science* (London: HMSO, 1969).
4. *Commonwealth Student Mobility: Commitment and Resources. A Report of the Commonwealth Standing Committee on Student Mobility* (London: Commonwealth Secretariat, 1986).

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knowledge to the students? The success of the Open University of the U.K., with its radio and television programmes, home experimental kits and tutors all over the country, captured the imagination not only of the public in the U.K. and policy makers and politicians in many other parts of the world, but of international civil servants who populate development and intergovernmental agencies such as the Commonwealth Secretariat. The idea of a University of the Commonwealth for Co-operation in Distance Education seemed a good one to promote.

In June 1987, members of the Group of Experts, chaired by Right Honourable Lord (Asa) Briggs of Lewes, were not at all ambiguous about their aspirations for this idea. In the letter of transmittal to the Commonwealth Secretary-General, they urged that:

> *. . . the Commonwealth should respond to the challenges by creating a new institution, multilateral in character, so as to enable it to draw in the contributions of, and promote links between, institutions in all Commonwealth countries . . . we believe that in order to appeal to the imagination the most appropriate name would be the University of the Commonwealth for Co-operation in Distance Education. We have no doubt that this university would not only meet the needs of the people in individual countries, but would also strengthen the Commonwealth association itself.*

The Briggs Report suggested that the budget for the proposed institution be about £2.4 million in the first year rising to £5 million by the fifth year.[5]

Most of the Heads of Governments of the Commonwealth, who met in Vancouver, 1987 also thought such a University of the Commonwealth was a grand idea, and they said so in their communiqué, where they described it as *"...an imaginative and constructive approach to meeting the urgent educational needs of member countries."* They recognised *"the proposals [of the Briggs Committee] could usher in a new era of Commonwealth co-operation in education and significantly widen learning opportunities for young people and adults throughout the Commonwealth."*[6] They were much attracted by the Report's central proposition that *"...any learner anywhere in the Commonwealth shall be able to study any distance teaching programme available from any bona fide college or university in the Commonwealth."*

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5. Asa Briggs in *Towards a Commonwealth of Learning, Report of the Expert Group on Commonwealth Co-operation in Distance Education and Open Learning* (London: Commonwealth Secretariat, 1987).
6. *Communiqué of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting* (Vancouver, Canada, 1987).

CANADA CARIBBEAN DISTANCE EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMME

Under a grant agreement with the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, COL is carrying out an innovative five-year pilot programme which provides undergraduate scholarships for Caribbean students to study "at a distance" through Canadian post-secondary institutions. The new Canada Caribbean Distance Education Scholarship Programme (CCDESP) continues to respect the academic strengths and ideals of the long-standing Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Programme (CSFP), while providing an exciting new dimension by launching scholarships onto the "information highway." Upon the advice of Caribbean partners, the scholarships apply to those vocational areas in which there are identified skill shortages. The first group of students commenced studies in September 1998.

With the assistance of The University of the West Indies, the programme is being delivered in four countries by three Canadian Universities. Alberta's Athabasca University is providing information technology programmes in Jamaica, Memorial University of Newfoundland is developing teacher education in Dominica and St. Vincent & the Grenadines and Mount Saint Vincent University in Nova Scotia is offering tourism management in St. Lucia and St. Vincent & the Grenadines.

While COL is responsible for the overall programme, it works closely with Canadian and Caribbean institutions and governments, particularly to facilitate co-operative working relationships between Canadian and Caribbean educational institutions and study centres that serve as hosts for the students. Unlike most other study-abroad schemes, this one ensures that local institutions are partners in arrangements, providing them with opportunities for further collaboration and growth.

The University of the West Indies is a full and contributing partner in the CCDESP, providing it and the Canadian institutions the knowledge, experience and local infrastructure to enrich both the curriculum and learning environment.

The CCDESP is an opportunity for COL to be a leader and an architect in fashioning a new model of educational co-operation geared to today's realities. COL can thereby play a critical role in stemming the tide of weakening donor support for the present CSFP. This model also equips new generations of Commonwealth nationals to use distance learning and new communications technologies to become productive citizens equipped to lead their countries with self-assurance into the new millennium. It is an innovative and effective means of dealing with the human dimension of globalisation, empowering individuals to confidently play effective and meaningful roles in the global knowledge-based economy.

Further information: *www.col.org/clippings/CCDESP.htm*

The Heads of Governments went beyond endorsing an initiative. They were almost prescriptive in expressing a desire that "*. . . the Commonwealth Institution [will] promote co-operation in distance education [and] which may become the University of the Commonwealth for co-operation in distance education.*" They endorsed "*. . . a Commonwealth University and College network for distance education [with] headquarters in Canada and various units for example in Britain,*

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the Mediterranean, the Caribbean, Eastern and Southern Africa, West Africa, South Asia and the Pacific." They also expressed the hope that *". . . in due course, the new institution would be able to generate further funding by bilateral and multilateral donor agencies, through contract work and by support from the private sector. Once sufficient resources were available it might be possible to proceed with the University of the Commonwealth."*[7] This idea was, in many ways, very forward looking at a time when the technologies of today were not even on the horizon.

The task of taking the ideas of the Briggs Report and the desires of Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) 1987 and turning it into an action plan [8] was entrusted to a working group in 1988 under the chairmanship of Sir John Daniel (the Daniel Committee). Daniel (then President of Laurentian University, Canada, and currently Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO), always a pragmatist, was confronted with a number of incompatible demands, which clearly was a cause for tension. These demands seemed mostly to be driven by political considerations. In a fairly candid public address to the Pan-Commonwealth Forum in Brunei in 1999, Daniel described these tensions:

> *First there was tension between providing distance learning programmes for Commonwealth countries and helping them generate such programmes themselves... The evolution of the Canadian view on this issue was typical. The Department of Communications had laid the Canadian groundwork for CHOGM. However, once COL had been established as a new multilateral organisation, Canada asked CIDA, the Canadian International Development Agency, to represent Canada within COL. CIDA arrived with a different view, but a view shared by AIDAB, its Australian equivalent, and the British Overseas Development Agency. These agencies had seen too many examples of the failure of western technological solutions in the developing world. They believed that COL's most useful function would be to help Commonwealth countries develop an indigenous capacity for distance teaching. The COL was a camel that had been pushed into CIDA's tent rather than its own idea. Although CIDA's staff contributed to the planning of COL with professionalism and enthusiasm, the project simply did not have, for their superiors, the salience that it had for the Department of Communications. The British shared the CIDA view that COL was about teaching people to fish rather than giving them fish. However, they had*

7. Ibid.

8. *The Commonwealth of Learning: Institutional Arrangements for Commonwealth Co-operation in Distance Education* (London: Commonwealth Secretariat, 1987).

> *another problem. Margaret Thatcher did not like multilateral agencies. She was not eager to invest money, through COL, in another multilateral agency which might do things she did not approve of.*[9]

The Daniel Committee very clearly recognised the risks that were inherent in the idea of a university, funded by voluntary contributions and needing to contend with constant debate and tensions between bilateralism and multilateralism, national interest and international collaboration, hi-tech and low-tech, global provisions and indigenous development and between "giving fish" and "teaching to fish." The solution the committee produced was not quite the ***university*** that Briggs envisaged, but an ***agency*** that did a number of things that were both academic and developmental, in support of developing distance and open education capacities and co-operation in, between and among Commonwealth nations. These included:

- Assisting with the creation and development of institutional capacity in distance education in member countries.
- Facilitating the channelling of resources to projects and programmes in distance education.
- Providing information and consultancy services on any aspect of distance education including the selection of appropriate technology.
- Undertaking and supporting staff training in the techniques and management of distance education.
- Facilitating inter-institutional communication links.
- Undertaking and supporting evaluation and applied research in distance education.
- Assisting with the acquisition and delivery of teaching materials and more generally facilitating access to them.
- Commissioning and promoting the adaptation and development of teaching materials.
- Establishing and maintaining procedures for the recognition of academic credit.
- Assisting in the development of local support services to students.
- Stimulating and supporting any other activities that fall within the agency's areas of interest by such means as may be approved by the Board of Governors.

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9. John Daniel, "Distance Learning in the Era of Networks: What are the Key Technologies?" (paper presented at the first Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning, Brunei Darussalam, 1999).

The Daniel Committee envisaged a budget of £1.4 million in the first year of operation to around £2.5 million by about the fifth year.

The founding Board of Governors of COL received these instructions and about Cdn$9.2 m.[10] to embark upon what Ramphal referred to as an "imaginative idea." President James Maraj was invited to turn these prescriptions into action, which he did, drawing on his experience as vice-chancellor, diplomat, international civil servant and educator. In shaping COL's early years, the President recognised that Commonwealth Heads of Governments created the organisation in response to a number of concerns that were all pointing in the same direction for their practical resolution. Whether that concern was developing countries wanting to increase access to formal education or developed countries exploring the possibilities of communications technology for similar reasons; developing countries trying to build training networks to meet national objectives for human resource development or developed countries looking for more flexible ways of delivering education and training; developing countries trying to redress disadvantages through programmes of rural and community development or developed countries wanting to provide greater equality of opportunity for disadvantaged members of their communities, the conclusion was the same — that open learning supported by distance learning approaches must become an essential part of the policy response in all Commonwealth countries.

But, as policy concepts, open learning and distance education were for various reasons phrases in search of definition in many Commonwealth (as well as many other) countries. Some countries — Australia, Britain, Canada, India and New Zealand, for example — could draw on practical experience of the possibilities and problems of distance learning. Others were concluding that they should gain their own experience. No less important, the technologies of distance learning were themselves beginning to change under the impact of a series of electronic revolutions. The advent of personal computers and satellite communication was opening up entirely new ways of thinking about the formal education and training of people who, because of distance or the circumstances of their lives, were unable to be in regular face-to-face contact with their teacher.

Now, as COL begins a new decade of work, open and distance learning has an important place on the policy agendas of all Commonwealth countries. Each country is responding in terms of its own assessment of its national need, calling on the experience and advice of other countries, agencies and institutions as necessary. COL has become an important source of expert advice and guidance on the policy implications of open learning, as well as on the

10. *Report of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting held in Vancouver, Canada* (London: Commonwealth Secretariat, 1987).

technologies and professional and practical requirements of effective distance learning. Indeed, it is the only international agency that has been created specifically to extend the knowledge and mobilise the expertise needed for effective distance education. Its work has been shown during the last ten years through its association with about 600 projects in almost all Commonwealth countries, naturally enough, most of them being in developing countries.

the work

COL is very important to people like ourselves. And in its decade or so of existence it has definitely demonstrated its pivotal importance. It was one of the finer initiatives taken by the Commonwealth.

PROFESSOR REX NETTLEFORD
Vice-Chancellor, University of the West Indies,
and member of the Asa Briggs Group of Experts[11]

Since its inception COL has been guided in its development by the views expressed in the two reports (Briggs and Daniel) that spelt out the contribution it is expected to make to Commonwealth co-operation in education. For that co-operation to happen, COL must be able to call upon its own critical mass of knowledge and experience. Its headquarters staff is comprised of men and women who are experts in the specialised components of distance education. They keep in touch with national and international experts in their field. They are also well informed about the needs of Commonwealth countries and the policy options these countries can realistically be expected to consider as they frame their approach to open learning and distance education. But COL is, and will continue to be, a small agency. It is by working alongside and through men and women in their own agencies and institutions, and by commissioning some of them to work on various projects, that COL's officers mobilise Commonwealth co-operation and perform the role of change agents.

Between 1989–1999, COL made use of the expertise of 400 consultants from 39 Commonwealth and 4 non-Commonwealth countries.[12] Just as important as those numbers is that the exchange of expertise between these consultants was South-South as well as North-South, which exemplifies COL as a very special kind of Commonwealth agency.

COL's mandate is to mobilise knowledge and expertise in the field of delivering education and training that is both new and undergoing rapid change in the technologies used. Such a mandate raises daunting policy issues for governments, education and training systems and institutions, but it promises to open windows to the future in the way that formal educational activities are being conceptualised and put into practice.

UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES DISTANCE EDUCATION CENTRE (UWIDEC)

Since its early days, COL has worked closely with the University of the West Indies (UWI) in enhancing its distance education offering and delivery.

In 1983, long before COL was established, The University of the West Indies formally began offering distance education courses using an audio teleconferencing system that was known as the UWI Distance Teaching Experiment — later Enterprise — UWIDITE. Course delivery was primarily via teleconferencing, but students also received supplementary print materials. In addition to formal programmes such as the Certificate in Business Administration and the Certificate in Education programmes, UWI also offered outreach and related programmes in heath, agriculture, and education and facilitated UWI administrative meetings over the teleconferencing system.

11. Rex Nettleford in *Ten Years of The Commonwealth of Learning: A celebration of achievement (Summary Report 1996-1998)* (Vancouver: The Commonwealth of Learning, 1999).

12. *Ten Years of The Commonwealth of Learning: A celebration of achievement (Summary Report 1996-1998)* (Vancouver: The Commonwealth of Learning, 1999).

COL arranged staff exchanges with a Canadian university in 1991. UWI gained knowledge of enhanced distance education systems and the Canadian institution gained first-hand knowledge of operating teleconferencing facilities.

In 1991/92, COL carried out an appraisal of distance education at the University of the West Indies. At the request of the University, COL convened a team of consultants — Mr. Bill Renwick (New Zealand), Dr. Doug Shale (Canada), and Professor Chandrasekhara Rao (India) — to conduct the review. The main recommendations of the report were accepted by the Vice-Chancellor and formed the basis on which an agreement was reached between the Caribbean Development Bank and the University for the funding of a major expansion of distance education. COL was also called upon by the Bank and UWI to provide an independent technical review of the UWIDITE system during this process.

This enabled UWI to improve the quality of its distance education offerings, and move towards being a full dual-mode institution, in which distance education programmes are offered alongside traditional face-to-face programmes.

On 1 August 1996, an amalgamation of the Distance Education Unit, Challenge and UWIDITE was completed, and the Distance Education Centre (UWIDEC) was established.

UWIDEC works with faculties of UWI located on the three campuses in Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad & Tobago, as well as with other organisations, to develop and deliver quality programmes by distance, to meet the learning needs of the people of the Caribbean. DEC regional centres are also located in all the English-speaking Caribbean countries that support UWI.

In addition to complete first-year curricula, UWIDEC also offers full degree programmes in agribusiness, management studies, and educational administration as well as several diploma and certificate courses.

Further information: *www.uwicentre.edu.jm/~uwidec*

In terms of policy, it is very important to emphasise that distance education is to be thought of in relation to the educational technologies that make it happen. Students must have access to information about programmes of study as well as to the programmes themselves. They must also receive effective tutoring and other forms of personal support, which must be reinforced by regular feedback from the institution in the form of study materials, marked assignments, and assessment or examination of their performance. Teachers must have the professional expertise to know how, within the resources potentially available to them, they can devise effective programmes of distance education for their students, how these programmes can best be packaged for study purposes and how students are to be tutored and supported as they study them. Those responsible for managing distance teaching operations must administer complex activities that require infrastructural support in the form of telecommunications, the ability to produce, print, publish and distribute publications, and the organisation of structures for careful forward planning and funding. And those responsible for education systems that are committed to distance education approaches must know in what ways the demands for funding, trained personnel

and supporting resources differ from those of conventional, face-to-face forms of teaching — and they must have policies, funding arrangements and management systems that will enable effective distance education to take place.

However it is organised, distance education seeks to create conditions under which effective learning can take place without the continuing presence of face-to-face teachers. To do that it must distribute, add and recombine the elements of effective teaching — elements that face-to-face teachers possess themselves and express through professional knowledge and expertise that they have at their fingertips. Whatever form they take, and however they are organised, distance education programmes are systems of teaching and learning. All the components of each system must be present and working efficiently.

The members of the Briggs and Daniel Committees knew from practical experience that in order for distance education to be effective in many parts of the Commonwealth, it must provide practical answers to the requirements listed above. At a time when governments and educationists were coming to grips with the policy implications of distance education, their reports gave clear advice on the objectives distance education could serve, its components and the importance of seeing them in system terms as subsets of administration, production, delivery, support and maintenance.

The Memorandum of Understanding[13] (MOU) agreed upon by Commonwealth countries on 1 September 1988 translated that advice into COL's functions and objectives. These are the functions and objectives that have determined COL's policies and organisational responses from its beginning. They were reviewed in 1993 by the Progress Review Committee, which, in terms of the MOU, reviewed COL's performance during its first five years. The Progress Review Committee endorsed the functions and objectives as a suitable framework within which COL would be able to make any policy changes that may be needed in the future.[14]

It is helpful to comment on these functions and objectives here because they itemise both the components from which effective systems of distance education are fashioned and what COL was required to do with respect to them and in the interests of human resource development in Commonwealth countries. The ten substantive functions and COL's duties encompassed:

- **Creating and developing institutional capacity:** For countries and institutions embarking on distance education, the creation and development of institutional capacity are basic policy and management requirements. COL's task was to assist member countries.

13. *Memorandum of Understanding Between Governments of the Commonwealth on Co-operation in Distance Education (The Commonwealth of Learning, 1988).*

14. *Report of the Progress Review Committee of the Commonwealth of Learning* (Vancouver: The Commonwealth of Learning, 1994).

CANADIAN EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY USED TO ESTABLISH MALAYSIAN MEDICAL EDUCATION NETWORK

Canadian Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Jean Chrétien, launched the expansion of the Malaysian Health Network at a signing ceremony held on 19 January 1996 in Kuala Lumpur. The Commonwealth of Learning was instrumental in facilitating the development of the network and the use of Canadian technology to provide training to health professionals located throughout the country.

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), the National University of Malaysia, first established the Malaysian Medical Education Network in July 1993. With technical assistance from COL and support from the Malaysian Ministry of Health, the first audio-graphics teleconferencing systems were installed at the UKM Faculty of Medicine with remote sites at base hospitals in four regional locations. The network has since been successfully used to provide the delivery of a training programme in family medicine.

So successful, in fact, that in late 1995, UKM moved towards expanding the network by an additional 40 sites. By enlisting COL's technical assistance and buying power, Malaysia was able to obtain the requisite equipment from a Canadian manufacturer, DETAC Corporation, of Red Deer (Innisfail), Alberta, at considerable cost savings. This arrangement also contributed to boosting COL's purchasing position on behalf of all Commonwealth countries.

All other UKM post-graduate medical education programmes now employ strategies based on the successful family medicine programme. And, as a result of this effective partnership, UKM is also expanding distance education opportunities with several faculties.

In recognition of her pioneering work as project co-ordinator for the Malaysian Medical Education Network, Professor Sharifah H. Shahabudin, Director of UKM's Department of Medical Education, received a COL/ International Council for Distance Education *Award of Excellence* in June 1995 at a ceremony in Birmingham, England. In establishing the Malaysian Health Network, Professor Shahabudin was responsible for launching the first distance teaching programme at her institution and the first medical distance teaching programme in Malaysia.

As an exercise in "model building," COL's experience in several audio-conferencing installations has demonstrated both the value and affordability of these technologies in the context of small distance education programmes. It has also provided practical lessons on the technical and functional questions surrounding the more effective deployment of this technology within the developing world.

Further information: *www.col.org/models/telecon.htm*

- **Programmes in distance education:** In face-to-face teaching, the basic professional requirement is suitably qualified and trained teachers who will teach students in classrooms, laboratories and workshops. In distance education, the basic professional requirement is programmes of study that have been well conceived, planned and organised in learning modules that are user-friendly and capable of being studied independently by students who may or may not be able to call on regular tutorial assistance. Programmes

incorporate all the compulsory and optional courses that are to be completed by students in line with the standards required for particular degrees, diplomas, certificates and other academic and vocational awards. The writing and production of study programmes are complex activities that combine academic knowledge and pedagogical insight with expertise in course design, appropriate use of audio and visual media as well as print and practical knowledge of production processes. COL's task was to facilitate the channelling of resources to projects and programmes.

- **Information and consultancy:** Access to accurate, relevant information and sources of advice is essential to all effective distance education operatives. COL's task was to provide information and consultancy services on any aspect of distance education including the selection of appropriate technology.

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF TANZANIA

While Tanzania is regarded as one of the poorest countries of the world, it has nonetheless placed a lot of faith on the role of education for development. Knowledge and skills are considered essential catalysts to the whole effort in improving not only the status of the economy of the Nation but also that of individuals at the household level...Sharing experiences, acquisition of knowledge and skills and commitment to succeed will see the Open University of Tanzania and similar institutions provide not just alternatives but strong additional means to higher education for millions of people who would otherwise go without any.

– Professor G. Mmari, Vice Chancellor, The Open University of Tanzania

In 1989, COL commissioned Mr. Alan K. Cutting of the Educational Technology Centre, City Polytechnic, Hong Kong, to serve as a consultant to the Planning Committee for the establishment of an Open University of Tanzania. His report, *The Role of Media Technology within the Proposed Open University of Tanzania*, became a major planning document that fed into a subsequent joint UNESCO/COL study that drew up an implementation plan in 1993. COL further assisted with staff training programmes and materials transfer.

The Open University of Tanzania (OUT) became operational in March 1993 and admitted its first intake of 766 students in January 1994. Overcoming several technological and logistical hurdles within the country, the University is using the postal system to handle printed study materials, the telephone, radio, television (in a limited way), CD-ROMs, the fax, the computer and audio and video cassettes.

OUT now has over 5,000 students registered, including a prison inmate and the country's Minister of Science, Technology and Higher Education — both enrolled in the LL.B. (law) programme. It offers seven degree programmes and a Foundation Course — a bridging course for those with inadequate preparation for university studies. The first convocation was held in 1999.

Further information: *www.col.org/10th/best/out.html*

- **Staff training and management:** Distance education has distinctive professional requirements and it is the same with its management. COL's tasks were to undertake training in the techniques and management of distance education and support the training efforts of others.

RAJIV GANDHI FELLOWSHIP SCHEME

I am most grateful for this incredible learning opportunity — one that until now I thought could never be possible.

– Rajiv Gandhi Fellowship Scheme student

I enjoyed working with (the students) and found the course in distance education interesting, thereby increasing my knowledge. I wish to thank The Commonwealth of Learning for giving me the opportunity to be a tutor/ counsellor for these students.

– Rajiv Gandhi Fellowship Scheme tutor

The Rajiv Gandhi Fellowship Scheme (RGFS) was launched by COL in association with India's Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) in 1994. It was named as a tribute to former Indian Prime Minster Rajiv Gandhi, whose unbounded faith in education played a key role in the establishment of COL.

In 1995, 100 students selected by Ministries of Education in 15 developing Commonwealth countries were enrolled in the programme and began studies for their Master's of Distance Education degree. The master's programme was delivered through a mix of print and electronic media by IGNOU, supported by tutors in each of the countries. The tutors were senior educational administrators who were recruited and trained in the curriculum contents, student support services and distance education methodologies by IGNOU staff in co-operation with COL. About 60 of the original 100 RGFS students graduated in 1998.

The Rajiv Gandhi Fellowship Scheme not only enabled a significant number of students from several countries to obtain master's degrees at a reasonable cost; it also helped to build up a cadre of trained professionals in distance education who may bring their newly acquired skills to a wide variety of programmes in the schools, colleges, universities and government ministries where they work. All of this was accomplished without the students having to leave their homes or take time off from their responsibilities to their families, employment and communities.

An external evaluation was conducted, which recommended that the programme be continued following the updating and the internationalisation of the learning materials. Working with staff at IGNOU, COL supported this revision and updating to both strengthen the course and make it more appropriate for an international audience.

COL is now working on formulating a second offering of the RGFS in partnership with a consortium of institutions, including IGNOU, throughout the Commonwealth. One of the goals of this arrangement would be awarding a "pan-Commonwealth" master's degree upon completion of the programme.

Further information: *www.col.org/models/train.htm*

- **Communication links:** The Briggs Committee had a vision of open learning, one in which, in time, any student would be able to enrol in courses of distance learning in his or her own country or in any other Commonwealth country. Regardless of whether the vision will be realised in the bold terms in which it was expressed, communication between like-minded colleagues who are working together on common objectives is indispensable in the development and improvement of distance education. COL's task was to facilitate communication links between institutions. In our electronic age, communication links imply telecommunication in its various modes. But the links to be made are also professional links, and national, regional and Commonwealth professional associations are means to facilitate such linkages.

TELECONFERENCING AT THE INDIRA GANDHI NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY AND INDIAN OPEN UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

The Commonwealth of Learning and India's Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) have had a very close, long-standing, multi-faceted and fruitful relationship. COL has provided training, resources and international connections and IGNOU has willingly assisted Commonwealth partners throughout the globe by sharing its particularly relevant experience and expertise.

In particular, COL was able to help IGNOU develop a teleconferencing system for its administrators and students. In early 1993 COL agreed to install an IGNOU–co-ordinated audio-teleconferencing network among the open universities in India as the first phase to the linkage of the open universities throughout the Asian region. The installation of the first facilities at IGNOU (and one of its regional centres), Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University (Hyderabad) and Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University (Nashik) were completed in 1993.

This has since developed into an extensive video-conferencing network and in early 2000, thrilled Indian educators saw the realisation of a dream that they have been working towards for several years: the inauguration of Gyan Darshan, India's dedicated free-to-air educational television channel. A major player in this development, IGNOU is now the nodal agency for the channel, providing co-ordination and uplink services from its Electronic Media Production Centre.

Since its inception, all three of IGNOU's chief executives have been closely associated with COL. Founding Vice-Chancellor, the late Professor G. Ram Reddy, served on COL's founding Board of Governors and as COL's first Vice-President. Vice-Chancellor Professor Kulandai Swamy was instrumental in supporting several outreach programmes in conjunction with COL, such as the Rajiv Gandhi Fellowship Scheme and the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia, that could not have been possible without the University's generosity. Prior to and after his retirement as Vice-Chancellor in 1998, Professor Ram Takwale, served as Regional Adviser to the President for South Asia. He was succeeded by Dr. Abdul Khan, who had been on COL's staff for several years, most recently as Principal Communications Specialist (Educational Media and Non-formal Education).

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- **Evaluation and applied research:** Evaluation and applied research are not prominent features in education systems in most Commonwealth countries. But they are critical to the development and maintenance of effective distance education operations. COL's task was to undertake evaluation and applied research in distance education and support the efforts of others.

RESTRUCTURING UNIVERSITY EXTENSION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC

The Commonwealth of Learning has provided continuing support to the University of the South Pacific (USP) and its extension services through various reviews, training, evaluations and international connections. Highlights follow.

In 1991, at USP's request, COL conducted a review of distance education offered by the regional university throughout the Pacific islands. The review team was comprised of Mr. Bill Renwick (New Zealand), Professor St. Clair King (Trinidad & Tobago), Dr. Doug Shale (Canada).

With the view of improving its distance teaching procedures, and in conjunction with a separate review of general university administrative practices commissioned by the University Council with funding from the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation (CFTC), most of the recommendations contained in the COL review were accepted by the University and formed the basis of restructuring decisions that were taken by the University's Council in October 1992.

In January 1993, to assist in the restructuring, COL brokered an arrangement where The Correspondence School (New Zealand) provided the services of its training team to University Extension at USP for a short period.

University Extension at USP now has four components:

- a *Secretariat*, which co-ordinates the overall operation and links the section to the rest of the University;
- the *Distance Education Unit*, which is responsible for assisting teaching departments within the University to prepare and deliver their courses in the distance mode;
- the *Continuing Education Unit*, which is responsible for preparing and running all non-credit, community outreach programmes; and
- *University Centres*, which have been established in all 12 of the countries of the USP region with resources that include classrooms for tutorials, seminars and workshops; a library; audio and video facilities; and computer and science laboratories.

Also at the request of University and stemming from the COL review, The Commonwealth of Learning conducted a review of educational communication needs in the Pacific region and a parallel review of the options available to meet these needs.

The USP Communications Network (USPNet) was established in 1974 following the creation of the USP "Extramural Services" (now "University Extension") to provide a basic communications system, through shortwave radio, to help bridge the vast distances between the main campus in Suva and the other USP campuses and centres until such time as funding and technologies were available to provide the type of full-service telecommunications system envisaged in the latter review.

That time has come. The "USPNet 2000" upgrade project is now underway. The Governments of Japan, New Zealand (NZODA) and Australia (AUSAID), together with the USP member countries, are funding the development of a dedicated USP satellite telecommunications network which will function independently of local telephone networks.

USP's distant education students will be able to participate in audio tutorials, (conducted from any campus), communicate by telephone, fax or e-mail with a lecturer/tutor or another student; watch a live video transmission of a lecture from any of the three campuses and take part in video conferences (and tutoring) with the Laucala Campus in Suva.

University administration will also become more efficient with the availability of telephone, fax and e-mail communication via USPNet to all USP locations. Access to video conferencing will save time and travel in many cases.

Further information: *www.sidsnet.org/pacific/usp/ext*

- **Access to teaching materials:** The writing and production of teaching materials for use in distance education programmes is time-consuming and expensive. Thousands of teaching programmes and their associated teaching materials have already been produced and are in regular use somewhere in the Commonwealth. There are always compelling reasons why, after due consideration, institutions may decide to develop their own teaching materials for use in their own study programmes. But it is not a decision that should be made without knowing what other institutions have already produced. Much can be learnt about approaches and methods from courses that may not themselves be suitable for an intended purpose. Sometimes there are parts of courses that could be used as they stand or be suitably adapted. It is, therefore, important that people who are planning courses should have access to the already-existing stock of teaching materials so that they could then make informed decisions about how they should go about achieving their intentions. COL's task was to assist in the acquisition and delivery of teaching materials and, more generally, in facilitating access to them.

DISTANCE EDUCATION IN MAURITIUS

In 1989, COL commissioned Sir John Daniel, then President of Laurentian University (Canada), to undertake a review of education in Mauritius and to examine the potential for using distance education (*Distance Education for Human Resources Development in Mauritius: The Way Forward*). Daniel's report recommended the use of distance education in many educational areas as a way of increasing access to education and widening the breadth of course offerings. COL then began to work with the Mauritius Ministry of Education on a course of action for Mauritius to implement distance education throughout the country and brokered collaborative arrangements between Mauritius and institutions in other Commonwealth countries.

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One of the partner institutions was Laurentian University which obtained funding from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) to support an expanding relationship between the University of Mauritius (UM) and Laurentian in sharing resources and expertise, as well as the development of distance education infrastructures at UM. The project was funded for five years from 1992 and involved COL, as well as a number of other Canadian institutions and organisations in addition to Laurentian University. The relationship between Mauritius and Laurentian continues today. Both Mauritius and Laurentian Universities are officially bilingual (English and French).

UM opened its Centre for Distance Learning in 1993 to provide course development leadership and co-ordination of offerings, thus adopting "a new teaching and learning approach in certain modules, due to the inadequacy of the conventional method to fulfil the expectations of both the students and the faculty members." The Centre now offers courses/modules in technology, management, mathematics, and micro- and macro-economics, all of which have been adapted for local use from courses in use at Laurentian University (Canada), University of Victoria (Canada), University of Waterloo (Canada) and Monash University (Australia) — and new courses on statistics and communications skills have been developed entirely by UM faculty.

Mauritius is now also offering non-formal distance education through the Mauritius College of the Air. The College won a Certificate of Merit in distance education materials category of COL's Excellence in Distance Education Programme (1999) for its course *Information Technology in Everyday Life*.

- **Adapting and developing teaching materials:** Once an institution has decided what it wants to do about the teaching materials for a study programme, it then has to get them in the hands of its teachers and students. Many developing countries lack the people and resources to produce their own materials or the resources to purchase other people's teaching materials. COL's task was to commission and promote the adaptation and development of teaching materials.

INTRODUCING DISTANCE EDUCATION IN THE TRAINING OF LEGISLATIVE DRAFTERS

Good governance requires good laws and good laws require good drafting which in turn requires good drafters. Lawyers who need training in legislative drafting are scattered through many Commonwealth countries with widely different local conditions, but the "common law" framework which links almost all Commonwealth jurisdictions also justifies a common base curriculum.

The Commonwealth Distance Training Programme in Legislative Drafting was developed jointly by The Commonwealth of Learning and the Commonwealth Secretariat to meet the needs of member jurisdictions by providing workplace training rather than having to send trainees overseas for an extended period.

The course, print materials, audiotapes and assignments were designed specifically for independent study of the principles and practices of legislative drafting and the processes of preparing government legislation. While a course co-ordinator in England guides student progress, experienced professionals within local drafting workplaces also provide support.

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Thirty students, from legal departments of 14 Commonwealth Governments, were enrolled in February 1996 for a pilot delivery of the programme, administered under contract by The Royal Institute of Public Administration (International) in London and co-ordinated by Professor Keith Patchett who is also the chief course author/developer. By the time the pilot was completed in mid-1998, students from India, Malaysia, Singapore, Cyprus and the Falkland Islands had successfully completed.

The distance education training course is being evaluated and revised in the light of experience and it should then again become available for individual enrolment in those jurisdictions which are willing to provide local mentor support for the trainee drafters. Meanwhile the adaptability of the training course materials is being utilised to the full with the development of regional "hubs," through which training is offered by a mixture of distance and face-to-face methods. By early 1999, regional hubs had been established in the South Pacific and in Southern Africa and it is envisaged that arrangements will subsequently be made to serve similar needs for local training in the Caribbean and in India. Several higher education institutions involved in legal education have also indicated an interest in using the course in their own programmes.

Guided independent study resources make it possible for legislative drafters to be trained in their home jurisdictions while continuing with their work and without incurring the travel and extended subsistence costs which are involved in overseas residential courses. The total cost of locally based training is therefore estimated to be less than half that of overseas study.

Further information: *www.col.org/clippings/leg_draft.htm*

- **Recognition of academic credit:** The restrictive policies of many countries and institutions for the recognition of qualifications or partially completed qualifications gained in another Commonwealth country are impediments to open learning within countries, as well as between them. COL's task was to establish and maintain procedures for the recognition of academic credit.
- **Support services to students:** Typically, distance students are separated in time and place from the teachers whose courses they are studying. Too often, particularly in developing countries, distance students have little, if any support, whether from study centres, tutors, libraries, laboratories or workshops. COL's task was to assist in the development of local support services to students.

The challenge for any new international agency is not just to do things that others are not doing, but to take initiatives that are capable of transforming the field it is working in. Having been assigned the mandate to respond to developments in both distance education and telecommunications as applied to educational purposes, COL was working at the most important educational intersection of our time. During COL's first few years, that challenge was heightened by two inherent features of distance education itself at that time. First, particularly in developing countries of the Commonwealth, it is a new field of educational endeavour that raises important questions about models that may be relevant and

technologies that may be appropriate to their needs, circumstances and sources of funding. Moreover — and this is the second feature — the models that might be relevant are themselves being subjected to very considerable changes in response to innovations in communication and information technology. In both respects, developments worldwide since 1988 amply confirm that COL is an international agency whose time has come.

THE GHANA DISTANCE EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

In 1992, at the request of the Ministry of Education, Republic of Ghana, and sponsored by COL, Mr. Reuben A. Aggor of the University of Ghana and 1991 COL Fellowship participant, Dr. Kofi Pecku of Cape Coast University (Ghana), Dr. Colin Yerbury of Simon Fraser University (Canada), and Professor Peter Kinyanjui (COL staff) conducted and published a *Survey on Distance Education in Ghana*. The establishment of a national unit to co-ordinate distance education in Ghana was one of the major recommendations contained in the report.

With encouragement from COL, the Ghana Distance Education Development Project was formed as a collaborative effort by three Ghanaian universities and one university college to meet the education needs of identified sectors of the Ghanaian population using distance education. The Project is supported by Simon Fraser University with long-term funding from The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) through the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC).

Simon Fraser University is sharing expertise in distance education practice and in developing distance education consortia, assisting with the acquisition and appropriate use of computer equipment, providing training-the-trainer programmes and supporting the development of viable financial and management systems.

Addressing social and economic goals for Ghana, the priorities for course development include the provision of teacher upgrading courses and programmes in business administration. The University College of Education of Winneba, a teacher training college, was the first institution to begin offering distance education courses in 1997.

Further information: *www.sfu.ca/cde/intl/ghana.htm*

When COL began its work, distance education was pre-eminently a matter of printed materials, postal and courier services, and the main contacts between teachers and their students, as well as between teachers and colleagues working in distance education in other institutions and countries, were by correspondence. Printed materials remain — and will probably long continue to be — the mainstay for most distance education programmes. But with the advent of audio-conferencing, facsimile, desktop publishing, computerised databases, Internet, World Wide Web, CD-ROMs and computerised multimedia, the production of printed materials, the means by which they can be accessed by

students and the means by which teachers can interact with students studying at a distance are such that distance education, considered as a mode of education, is being rapidly transformed.

Within the Commonwealth, there is an enormous amount of innovation and development in distance education and COL had set out to become part of it. This was done by identifying the important questions, by devising strategic approaches for interventions, and by developing collaborative working relationships with key people and relevant organisations in the pursuit of mutually agreed objectives.

When COL started work at the end of 1988, there was, understandably enough, no clear perception of what it was and what its contribution to educational development would be. At first, many people engaged in distance education and some governments and international agencies mistakenly thought that COL was another development assistance agency to be turned to for funding assistance for their own projects. Ten years on, COL had established itself as the Commonwealth agency whose funds and energies were directed towards innovation and development in distance education in the context of human resource development. In all its initiatives, there was a reciprocal relationship between action and reflection: COL reflected on what needed to be done, embarked on courses of action, reflected on the results, and then decided whether further action was needed in a particular field of work and, if so, what form it should take.

This meant that once COL completed an innovative project, it did not become involved in its routine operations. COL shifted the expertise of its professional staff and financial resources to other projects. Here again, it is important to underline the co-operative nature of the ventures COL became involved in. Virtually all of its innovative efforts required capital and recurrent funding if they were to outlive their initial period of trial and development and become a regular feature of distance education in institutions or education systems in developing countries of the Commonwealth. This had two important implications. First, from the outset, COL needed to keep major development assistance agencies well informed of particular projects that they should keep in mind for their own future reference. Second, and more importantly, it meant that COL's innovative work must be of sufficient quality with clear practical results for those whom it was intended, so that development assistance agencies would recognise it as meriting further funding to make them permanent features of distance education programmes. Of course, in these difficult funding times, it cannot be assumed that there will always be a smooth progression from a successful innovation to its

adoption as a permanent feature for ongoing funding by the institutions and countries with which COL is working.

In other respects, too, COL had to be careful not to become encumbered with routine responsibilities that would make recurring claims on its modest annual budgets. One aspect of its work to which it had given a good deal of thought was in the important field of acquiring sets of teaching and learning materials for distance education purposes. A number of governments had proposed that COL should create a learning materials bank so that institutions and member governments could have a central point of reference. COL decided, however, that the continuing costs of assembling and maintaining such a resource would become too fixed. It therefore decided to carry out a more limited library role in assisting governments by creating a materials fund to facilitate the acquisition of materials. Helping institutions to acquire materials they can use is more important than maintaining a materials bank that merely gives access to materials for the purpose of assessing their usefulness. Another question which COL is still considering is whether it should seek a high profile on copyright matters or whether it can effectively serve distance education agencies in the Commonwealth in other ways without adding to its ongoing responsibilities.

Finally, there is a further point worth making in the context of the best use of scarce resources. Simply by existing and being a point of reference, COL performed a valuable service by enabling people in all parts of the Commonwealth to have quick access to informed answers to their questions about distance education in the context of human resource development. Its computerised databases, the specialised directories it published and distributed, the publications arising from roundtables, meetings, symposia and workshops it hosted and the reports of consultancies it commissioned were, in themselves, significant contributions to the state-of-the-art of distance teaching and learning. The detailed knowledge that COL's professional officers have of the latest proven developments in communications and information technology was also a valued source of information and advice that was in constant demand from people in all parts of the Commonwealth. And the various communication networks COL was developing made those exchanges of information and advice easier to achieve. As the Commonwealth's clearing-house on all aspects of distance education and its related technologies, COL was enabling administrators, teachers and users of distance education services to find informed answers to their questions much more efficiently than was the case before COL began its work.

COMMONWEALTH EDUCATIONAL MEDIA CENTRE FOR ASIA

The deployment of modern communications and information technologies can be a major instrument for widening access to learning, enhancing the quality of education and providing cost-effective education to a larger segment of the population for their social and economic betterment. With this in mind, the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) was established by COL in 1995 at the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) in New Delhi, India, in response to needs expressed by Asian countries for a specialised agency serving the region.

CEMCA recognises the importance of technology in education for Commonwealth Asian countries and provides a valuable service to the Asia region in promoting co-operation and collaboration in the use of electronic media resources for distance education. It supports the use of communications and information technology and facilitates exchange of educational media among the Asian member countries.

Over 10,000 educational radio and television programmes are now included in the CEMCA database — contributed from 150 organisations, covering 65 subjects in 10 languages across six countries. The Centre has had a significant impact in media training in the region. CEMCA also undertakes research and co-productions.

In 1998 the Government of India and COL signed an agreement that confers full international status to CEMCA. Under the new agreement, CEMCA will operate in India as a fully recognised international agency and be accorded the associated rights and privileges.

CEMCA's services are available to all developmental and educational institutions and agencies in Commonwealth Asia. CEMCA is also being used as a model by COL in the potential establishment of similar centres in other Commonwealth regions.

Further information: *www.col.org/clippings/CEMCAclip.htm*

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the need

The faces of marginalised people are legion. They are the faces of African children wasting away from diarrhea that could be prevented if only their desperate mothers knew how to put together a simple saline solution. They are the faces of struggling farmers in South Asia whose primitive agricultural methods have not changed for generations...of oppressed minority groups around the world still denied the right to vote. [15]

While distance and open education should not and cannot be seen as a panacea to solve all of the educational deprivation of Commonwealth nations, it would seem injudicious not to include it as an important part of a solution to bridge the gap between the demand for, and supply of, education. It is important to remember the pedigree of most distance education enterprises. The common aim over the years has been to spread enlightenment, knowledge and instruction to men and women who, usually for lack of money and the necessary formal qualifications, would otherwise be prevented from studying for higher educational awards. Most initiatives in distance education during the last 30 years have sought to increase opportunities for undergraduate studies. However, recently much more attention is being given to the non-university sectors, both formal and non-formal, as arguments based on equity are reinforced by consideration of economic efficiency. For the Commonwealth, it is hard to see how it could respond to the demands for more education other than to build on the experience of open learning gained over the last decade in order to provide for the next.

In November 2000, Ministers of Education or their representatives from all 54 Commonwealth countries met in Halifax for the 14th time since the establishment of the Commonwealth. On the whole, they can take pride in their record of achievements. Between 1960 and 2000, Commonwealth governments as a whole, and as part of the developing world's efforts at improving educational services, have made significant progress. Enrolment rates of those between 6 and 11 years old have increased from less than 50% to nearly 80% today; public expenditure on education has crawled up from 5.1% to about 5.6%. There are more children in school than ever before, more young people in colleges and universities, the number of trained teachers has been on the increase and there are more trained academics staffing colleges and universities.[16] But however laudable these gains are, they have not kept pace with population growth nor have they been sufficient to address the challenge of diversity, backlog of unmet demand and range of new clients. An educational crisis is in the making. The crisis is not limited to tertiary education only; it also includes within its shadow all sectors of education and training.

In a recent review of adult illiteracy, UNESCO reported that a full 23% of the world's adult population were totally blind to the written word; they were unable to write and were completely non-numerate.[17] For all intents and purposes, they are destined to be non-participants in a world requiring knowledge as a prerequisite for participation in fundamental human activities and the increasing democratisation of political systems.

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15. *Adult Education in a Polarizing World: Education for All* (Paris: UNESCO, 1997).

16. *EFA 2000 Assessment* (Paris: UNESCO, 2000).

17. *Global Synthesis: Education for All* (Paris: UNESCO, 2000).

COMMUNITY RADIOS PROVIDE NON-FORMAL EDUCATION AT LOW-COST

Community radio is an immensely powerful technology for the delivery of education — and its potential reach, globally, is enormous. Creating opportunities for communities to utilise this delivery system will enable disadvantaged groups to engage in a development agenda, sensitive to their needs.

In order to serve the underprivileged and rural poor, mass media such as radio must create conditions and mechanisms that provide people with genuine access to useful information. Such mechanisms will offer ways in which people can express their sentiments, opinions, views, dreams and aspirations, fears and insecurities, strengths and capabilities and, of course, their ideas for development.

Radio is an effective system for delivery of education to large numbers of people. It facilitates information exchange at the community level, acting as a "community telephone" and can be effective in literacy and formal/non-formal education. Radio can also cut across geographic and cultural boundaries.

Deploying distance education techniques and delivery systems such as radio and television based at the community level can directly address local issues and needs.

Radio systems, such as the portable solution that COL and others have utilised in community FM-radio initiatives, can also be effective in delivering education to the masses without the high infrastructure costs associated with radio broadcasting.

Community broadcasting can focus on addressing local needs through locally produced programming, but it can also provide a tremendous variety of quality educational content that is freely available for rebroadcast, from national and international sources, through satellite or the Internet. Care should be taken, however, to ensure that rebroadcasting is balanced with the needs of the local community and the provision of appropriate and relevant programming content.

Low-cost, portable, suitcase-sized community broadcasting stations have been set up by COL in Belize, Guyana, Namibia and South Africa, as well as a solar-powered version in Uganda. The stations broadcast a wide range of educational and informational services tailored to meet local needs. Associated training on programme production and broadcast technology has been provided to local operators.

Also, in co-operation with the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Authority, COL supplied and provided training for a portable FM radio station as a broadcasting and journalism training aid and, in collaboration with the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia, the Sri Lanka Open University and the Ministry of Agriculture, a Rural Communication Research Project has been initiated to integrate traditional and experiential knowledge with modern scientific advances. The project's findings will be shared through audio-broadcast to educate rural communities on environmental conservation and sustainable development.

Given its availability, accessibility, cost-effectiveness and power, radio represents a practical and creative medium for facilitating mass education in a rural setting.

Further information: *www.col.org/clippings/suitcase.htm* and *www.col.org/colme/radio.htm*

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Some 960 million individuals, most of them Commonwealth citizens, fall into this category. Adding to this misery is the deprivation of schooling to about 130 million children. Of the one billion children who do get into a classroom, there is a disparity between those fortunate enough to find themselves in politically stable, administratively well managed and economically better-endowed environments, and those who find themselves in less comfortable circumstances. The former could look to between 4,000 and 5,000 school days before adulthood and the latter, in some circumstances, to fewer than 400 school days. [18]

In the post-secondary sector, the situation is even more complex. Not only is the supply needed for those who are continuing their education and training without a break between school and college, but also opportunities need to be found for those who wish to return to learning. One estimate recognises that the current supply of post-secondary education of around 82 million places may need to be increased to about 150 million in the next 20 years and thereafter by between 8% and 11% annually. Sadly, educational inequality will continue globally and it is stark among Commonwealth countries.

Therefore, as we begin the new millennium, the challenge facing Commonwealth educational systems, as with their other global counterparts, is to find the ways and means to extend learning opportunities beyond the more than 960 million adults who are illiterate to the following:

- More than 130 million children, mostly girls, who currently do not have access to primary schooling.[19]
- More than 100 million children and countless millions of adults who fail to complete their basic education programmes, and millions more who satisfy school attendance requirements but do not acquire essential knowledge and skills. [20]

As well, opportunities must be offered to:

- Those who are functionally illiterate: Apart from the over 900 million illiterate people, there are almost half as many adults who cannot cope with the demands of daily life on the basis of their literacy levels (e.g., reading a health label, instructions to operate a radio, etc.).
- The physically challenged: Annually in Asia alone, 15 million people become disabled as a result of war, disease, accidents and malnutrition. Their major hope for self-improvement will be the education that has to reach them.

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18. Gajaraj Dhanarajan, "Distance Education and The New Technologies" (paper presented at the Commonwealth Broadcasting Association General Conference, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, August 1996).

19. *Human Development in South Asia. Report of the Human Development Centre* (Karachi, Pakistan: UNDP, 1998).

20. Ibid.

- The long-term unemployed: Long-term unemployment is a pathology; training people in such situations will pose special pedagogical challenges.
- Women and girls: The gender gap, despite our knowledge of the benefits of educating women, is still appalling. Given the nature of cultural and religious hurdles, ways may have to be found to circumvent these barriers to deliver education to an important half of humanity.
- Out-of-work youth: Youth, especially boys, require vocational training to be part of a productive economy. A combination of apprenticeship, employment and self-education need to be designed to assist them; failing to do so will be a catalyst for socially disruptive behaviours, social refusal and criminal activities by an undereducated and disgruntled population.
- Refugees and recent immigrants and non-nationals: Roughly 125 million people today live outside their countries of origin.[21] The flow or the movement of people, either for political or economic reasons, is not expected to slow. To better enable the process of settling down, educational programmes teaching language, social and job skills will have to be designed and delivered.

From basic education to professional development, the gap between needs and provisions, demand and supply, quantity and quality, and capability and capacity has been widening. The level of investment that will be required to bring education at the basic level to about one-fifth of humanity, beyond basic level to another fifth and lifelong learning opportunities to a third fifth is both daunting and clearly not reachable by 2015, which is being set as the next big target by forums such as UNESCO's Education for All (EFA). Just to keep up with basic needs alone will require more resources in the next ten years than all those used in the last ten. Not only have we to cope with a resource need, we also need to present education to those who need it in a meaningful and user-friendly basis.

Mere quantitative measures of education alone are not sufficient indicators of educational outcomes. Many Commonwealth countries, especially the smaller ones, suffer from a lot of other difficulties as well. These difficulties impinge on the quality of service, its efficiency and effectiveness. Reflective of these concerns, is a World Bank report,[22] providing background for the African Virtual University project, which says the following about the state of universities in Sub-Saharan Africa:

> *Tertiary education in Africa today faces serious challenges. Traditional public tertiary institutions alone — overwhelmed with*

21. *Minority Rights Group Report of a Seminar on Minority* (London: 1997).

22. "The African Virtual University," *World Development Report 1998/99 Background Papers: Knowledge for Africa* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 1999).

> *problems related to access, finance, quality and efficiency — are not up to meeting these challenges. Although higher education enrolment has doubled since 1985, only 3.5% of the age cohort, or 1.9 million students were enrolled in 1995...Prolonged economic difficulties and weak revenue generation are eroding governments' ability to meet the cost of higher education...As a result, universities in Africa suffer from low numbers of trained faculty, virtually non-existent levels of research, poor quality educational materials (e.g., African libraries have suffered immensely as collections have become out of date and laboratory equipment old, in disrepair and obsolete), and outmoded programmes...It is highly questionable whether tertiary institutions can develop further under the traditional model of higher education, particularly if the countries of Africa wish to expand — more than marginally — access to higher education while maintaining quality.*

The same could be said of institutions in many other parts of the Commonwealth.

It is in this environment of continually increasing and rapidly changing demand and expectations of satisfactory supply of services that COL has to reflect on its role and obligations to the Commonwealth. This requires asking some fundamental questions about educational services in the Commonwealth, including:

- What is the context of educational services in this second decade of COL?
- Who does COL see as the delivery actors of these educational services?
- Is there a future in "single mode" institutions, especially in the tertiary sector?
- How could an interaction be brought about between traditional forms of educational delivery and new ways of learning?

Public education systems across the Commonwealth during the last ten years have been under pressure to assist in increasing the human capital of the Commonwealth through the use of innovative delivery mechanisms. While they have responded to these pressures by expanding, restructuring, reforming and applying a limited range of technological tools, their management and the roles of their teachers have remained essentially the same for well over half a century. On the other hand, international debate has been about means as well as ends. Experts are finding that they no longer have the last word on the way professional services ought to be conceived and managed in their own fields. Four changes of global significance have created this situation:

- First, the last ten years have witnessed the amazing transformation of social and economic lives with the arrival of new technologies. This has created a new interdependence between knowledge and economic activity. The rapid rate of change in the technology makes the obsolescence of knowledge faster than ever before. Between two and three years is now said to be the half-life of knowledge. This leads to fears that investment into research and development will not bring the anticipated dividend unless the investment is also made into the retraining of the workforce. The implication for continuing education and training within the workforce, therefore, becomes obvious. Furthermore, enterprises based on information technology are becoming typically smaller and, at the same time, expecting a very high degree of problem-solving and decision-making skills from employees. All of this requires continuous learning. Such enterprises are proving themselves highly capable of quickly transforming themselves to changing circumstances, thereby responding to market opportunities and threats. Another factor in these equations is the uncertainty of job security for the employee. At any moment a person can be out of a job; an unbroken career in the same establishment is a thing of the past. More than ever before, individual workers are under pressure to take their own initiative to maintain employability by adding to their knowledge, expertise and skill. The implications for continuing and lifelong education and training are therefore becoming obvious.
- The second change is a clearer understanding of the global nature of economic competitiveness. Businesses and governments are asking themselves what they must do to achieve and maintain competitive advantage over their rivals. In this fight for survival one aspect that impacts on education and training is the nature of the workforce. There is generally a decline in the number of new entrants (with current knowledge and skills) into a workforce. This simply means that in order to maintain high levels of productivity as well as participation in the new knowledge-based work environments, those already in the workforce must be retrained and reskilled.
- The third of these changes is ideological. Economic liberalism is being confirmed as a guiding light for government policies seeking economic development. In the rich countries it is challenging the way the state should make public services available to its citizens, and in the poorer countries the international financial institutions (IFIs) are ensuring the mantra is accepted before development assistance or loans are dispersed. As a consequence, education systems are being deregulated and educational institutions are being cast in the role of competitors for market share. Governments are telling educators that education is important and that more is needed, but not more of the same. New funding regimes are then introduced and new forms of

accountability whose aim is to steer educational institutions towards greater efficiency are instituted. These have the immediate effect of changing the relationship between providers and users of the service. It also has the effect of changing the profile of the user as competition has a habit of chasing after new markets and therefore creating new products. From being a service available to only those in the 6 to 24 age cohort, it now becomes a service catering to the needs of lifelong learners and others outside of the mainstream.

- The last of these changes is the universal recognition that the best strategy to break the cycle of poverty and misery starts with education. Farmers with basic education are more productive than those with none; mothers with some education bring up healthier families than those without; workers with literacy and numeracy skills attract better wages than those without. The pressure on nations to enhance access to all levels of education arising out of these realisations has been on the increase over the last ten years and more.

We are living through a time of changing expectations. Previously, institutions of education imposed requirements that their students were obliged to accept. Now for the most part, at least in many countries of the world, schools and colleges must respond to the differing expectations of more diverse student bodies, especially after primary education. From acting as the central determinant of their students' lives, institutions are now expected to adapt to the fact that many of their students expect them to fit around their lives. To varying degrees, many institutions in the developed Commonwealth are beginning to respond to this new demand, especially in the case of adult students with other social, professional and family responsibilities. Perhaps the time has come for all institutions of the Commonwealth to transform in a similar manner.

Post-secondary education, in particular, is under enormous pressure to meet the needs of a diversity of learners, their learning context and needs. This sector of education is no longer the preserve of the 18 to 25 age group or of students solely engaged in full-time study. An increasing number of students are over the age of 25, many of whom may be making a late entry to higher education and are, therefore, more likely to be studying part-time. Their courses have to be organised so that they can study off-campus and many may indeed be enrolled in distance education programmes. The flexible nature of distance education is what enables them to pursue their studies. Already in the Commonwealth countries of Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the U.K., part-time (and distance) learners are beginning to outnumber full-time students. In India, close to 700,000 university students are currently studying at a distance.[23] The flexible nature of

23. S. Manjulika and V. Reddy, *Distance Education in India. A model for developing countries* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1996).

distance learning is what makes it possible for so many. Advances in communication technologies over the last decade and those expected to emerge over the next will further strengthen the call for our institutions to increase access beyond today's levels.

Taken together, these changes raise fundamental questions for all institutions engaged in teaching and learning. Within education systems, there is a growing recognition that teaching and learning are not synonymous. A strong view, gradually gaining acceptance, is that a principal objective of education is to enable students to take charge of their own learning. Students should be empowered and enabled "to learn to learn," as forcefully expressed in the Delors Commission Report to UNESCO.[24]

During the last ten years, these issues have been the focus of much academic debate and public discussion. They continue to be. The arguments centre on how far our institutions, especially the post-secondary ones, should preserve their traditions of teaching and how far they should acknowledge the changing nature of the world, including the character of learners and adapting to new circumstances. What is no longer in dispute is that post-secondary education must be more cost-effective and able to do more with less. This is one reason why distance education approaches must be given serious consideration as policy options in all Commonwealth countries.

Twenty years ago, the distinction between distance and face-to-face teaching was sharper than it is now. Under typical arrangements, distance teachers and their students were separated in time and space. They kept in touch with each other through printed study guides and correspondence tuition. Self-instructional lessons were an important part of the environment, and for some students the only interactions with the teachers were the materials. Today, distance students no longer need to be isolated. Students signing up for a course can expect to have their study materials supplemented in numerous ways. They may include local tutoring, workshops, on-campus study, Web and Internet-based relationships with the institution, telephone tutoring, video-conferencing seminars, etc. Good practice and information and communication technologies (ICTs) have changed the way distance education is practised today. More importantly, good pedagogical skills originally developed to meet the needs of the isolated student, as well as the instruments of the technological revolution, are becoming assets for use on-campus. All these developments have a bearing on who should be the new actors in enhancing learning access.

24. J. Delors, *Learning: The Treasure Within* Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-First Century (Paris: UNESCO, 1996).

Since governments are the sole financiers of educational services in most Commonwealth countries, they will determine the policies that best respond to national needs and provide a healthy return on investment. Many governments, while recognising the need to preserve institutional autonomy and independence, are beginning to urge institutions to become more entrepreneurial. They wish to see them becoming responsive to changing demands for programmes of study, characterised by flexible delivery and imaginative in measuring outcomes. Students, particularly those undertaking graduate and continuing professional courses, are increasingly being required to pay the full cost. In some countries, all universities are encouraged to deliver distance education courses.

To be added to the pressures for change coming from governments are those arising from changing enrolment patterns, new forms of education and training provision and the pervasive influence of new technologies. Few post-secondary institutions can remain immune from these pressures and influences, and by no means can all be assured of a continued existence. Some could find themselves merged with, or taken over by, other institutions and, as time goes on, their teaching missions may be broadened or changed altogether. Added to this is the probability of governments either allowing or inviting private enterprises to participate in the educational sector on a fee-for-service basis, as has been the case in at least one or two Commonwealth countries. Where this has happened, telecommunications have become an important factor in enabling learners to become members of learning networks. They also make it possible for members of a geographically dispersed teaching faculty to communicate with each other, to collaborate in the development of teaching materials and to take part in teaching programmes.

The scene is thus being set for a vast increase in networking among institutions, more scope for entrepreneurial activity and a blurring of distinction between distance and non-distance facilities and between public and private sector approaches. This then raises the question about regulating the educational sector under conditions where there may be many more delivery agents competing with each other under market conditions. In an extreme situation, this competition need not be limited to national boundaries only.

For governments, this new situation will require enacting protocols that will ensure quality academic, professional and vocational standards, as well as accreditation as part and parcel of "customer protection." For institutions, especially those serving the post-secondary sector, a serious re-examination of how they do business will be called for.

There are at present three broad types of institutions delivering educational services: those that teach almost entirely face-to-face students on-campus, those that teach entirely at a distance and those that combine face-to-face and distance. There are many who would argue that the first type, which would include a vast majority of Commonwealth colleges and universities, would be at the greatest risk if they do not change. Pressure to expand access, reduce costs and apply the new technologies may well increase. The entirely single-mode distance teaching institutions may be under less pressure, but the threat of greater competition from other providers may mean an increase in the quality of services and products far beyond present standards. The same may also be true of the dual-mode institutions. While they may be serving off-campus clients, their effectiveness to support this group of learners is far from satisfactory. In order to be effective, many would have to improve their pedagogical skills, administrative infrastructure and institutional policies.

All of these factors will require Commonwealth institutions to rethink and reform the culture of their organisations in significant ways. They must rectify a variety of internal biases, become more flexible in their teaching practices, basing them on solid principles, and refashion and restructure the processes that influence their effectiveness as learning organisations. This will specifically call for:

- An institutional commitment to excellence of teaching for ***all*** its students through the pedagogies that are appropriate to the learning circumstances of the individual, taking note of the contributions that information and communications technologies can make towards this objective.
- Have in place effective internal decision-making procedures for the setting of academic standards, goals and priorities, the planning and funding of the teaching/learning implications of academic reviews and developments, and for the personal accountabilities of teachers towards their students.
- A continuing focus in the institution's day-to-day life on the requirements of effective teaching and learning through faculty development.
- Developing tools and using them for effective planning, management and evaluation of resource-based teaching and guided independent study, whether for on- or off-campus students.
- Developing schemes for the induction of staff into the nature of their teaching responsibilities and programmes of staff development to assist all teachers to improve their skills as ***facilitators*** of student learning.
- Developing sensitive policies for enrolment of students in open and flexible learning schemes, recognising prior learning, enabling self-pacing, facilitating academic credit movement, etc.

COL's decade-long experience with Commonwealth education indicates the remarkable progress that Commonwealth institutions have made in becoming open, flexible, entrepreneurial, technology-rich and user friendly. However, there still persists in large pockets an inherently conservative academic culture. The essence of education is not seen to be changing despite the technological promise. At best, instructors and institutions are using technology to replicate their traditional practice, content and control. The relationship between teacher and learner; pedagogical strategies; control by the institutions; structure time and place of learning; those who are best served by the system; and the relevance of the curriculum have not fundamentally changed or even been seriously challenged by the new realities.

The influence of technology on schooling, learning, teaching and educational organisations has not been significant across the range of educational systems and sectors. Moreover, little is understood of how change in one could impact on all others. In the wider context, there are changes in society that will have ramifications for the educational systems and, in turn, changes in the educational systems will most probably influence the way society itself evolves. It is in this milieu of ever-changing circumstances that COL must define its role in the Commonwealth — that there should be a role for it seems implicitly obvious.

the niche

What we need is a bridgehead into the new information age. Over time such a bridgehead would enable us to influence the new information age by reinforcing those attributes that make the Commonwealth a force for good.

CHIEF EMEKA ANYAOKU
Commonwealth Secretary-General, 1990–2000[25]

The objectives and functions set for COL in its Memorandum of Understanding of 1988 were a clear expression of Commonwealth expectations. These were broadly stated and relatively open in their interpretation. In its first ten years, on the basis of frequent strategic plans, the organisation prioritised at a higher level some functions and relegated others to a lower ranking in light of available financial resources. For instance, lesser weight was given to student support services and research, and more to developing skills in materials development, communication links and information exchange. The former would have been important if COL had gone into the delivery of courses, but it did not. Therefore its role was limited to finding out what good practice in student support systems is and sharing that information with colleagues around the Commonwealth. But the world today is not the world of the 1980s. While many past tensions still exist, there are also the realities of the new age. It is in this context that COL must re-examine not only its objectives and functions, but also the opportunities that are fast emerging and the vulnerabilities of not exploiting those opportunities.

Unlike in the 1980s, distance education is now the centre of attention in developed and developing economies. Perhaps it is reflective of the impact made by years of advocacy by practitioners of distance education and agencies such as COL. It is also a reflection of the power of the new technologies and the promotion of these technologies as tools for a whole range of human activities including education. Perhaps for the first time in the history of education, governments, policy makers and educational administrators are seeing ways in which mass education can be achieved despite the challenges of geography, social isolation, economics, limited human resources and other impediments to knowledge development and distribution. Not everybody engaged is happy about the situation. There are many vocal critics of mass education (especially at the tertiary level), who speak of the dehumanising nature of the relationship between teacher and learner, loss of academic freedom and autonomy, erosion of academic creativity, fear of turning a noble human endeavour of long-standing tradition into a commodity, erosion of quality and an absence of opportunity for debate, discussion and collective reflection on which good education is based. These fears and concerns may be unfounded, but they still need to be addressed.

In 1988 when COL was first established, there were about 600 publicly funded distance education facilities globally, delivering under 25,000 courses to about one million students who were almost all part-time and in the post-secondary sector. The situation has changed somewhat. Today, there may be as many as

25. Emeka Anyako, "The Commonwealth in the New Information Age" (paper presented at the first Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning, Brunei Darussalam, 1999).

1,133 institution-based distance education ventures.[26] In excess of 40,000 courses are being made available to about three million students, both full-time and part-time, who are studying through these channels which cover a range of educational sectors from non-formal basic education to postgraduate and post-experience training.

A large part of the recent growth has been happening in North America, engaging in the process some of that continent's top universities, many of which are privately funded. In a recent survey of higher education, the *Economist* cited Ivy League universities such as Duke, Stanford and Columbia, as well as private universities such as Phoenix and Jones, as examples of using technologies to deliver cheaper and more flexible learning opportunities. Along with their analogues such as The Globewide Network Academy,[27] Athena University,[28] World Lecture Hall,[29] and the Western Governors University[30] these institutions do not shy away from using courses of other institutions, giving students credit for their credentials as part and parcel of their academic programmes. Would-be students can use the Internet sites of these universities to download course lecture notes, multimedia textbooks, etc., for virtually any course they wish, drawing from 17,000 and 19,000 courses that are currently available from the Web in the U.S. alone.

Developments very similar to these are also appearing in parts of the Commonwealth. In Canada, Athabasca and Nexus (since renamed Landsbury University); in the U.K., the Open University and the newly established e-University; in India, the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU); and in Malaysia, the Multi-Media University (MMU) and the International Tun Abdul Razak (ITAR) Virtual University are all taking or planning to take similar approaches. These universities are beginning to demonstrate an approach that is more flexible in the use of courses. Rather than design and develop all of the courses needed for their programmes, they are prepared to acquire rights to courses that already exist and at the same time put the choice of sourcing courses in the hands of the students. Such choices are not simply limited to dedicated and accredited universities but are also from "corporate universities" such as those organised and run by Motorola, Disney, the National Electronics Corporation, British Aerospace and Microsoft among others. Underpinning this growth are technologies that were not even on the educational horizon in 1988.

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26. V. Reddy and S. Manjulika, *The World of Open and Distance Learning* (New Delhi: Viva Books, 2000).
27. www.gnacademy.org
28. www.athena.edu
29. www.utexas.edu/world/lecture
30. www.wgu.edu

The technologies that are being employed are not just tools to enhance the richness of the learning environment. They are fundamentally transforming the way educational institutions conduct their core business of teaching and learning. Of the many technologies that have emerged since 1988, four stand out as extremely important. They are:

- **E-mail**: Increasingly, e-mail is becoming the most widely used medium from exchange of gossip to serious dialogue and collaborative research. It has also become an important supplement to classroom teaching, allowing conversation between teachers and teachers, students and teachers, students and external experts, and teachers and primary sources of information. Bulletin board services extend the classroom beyond fixed timetables, listservs bring communities of learners together and assignments and term papers are beginning to be routinely channelled through e-mail. On-campus education is being enriched by e-mail facilities and off-campus education is made more humane and interactive. In economically well-placed Commonwealth countries, the use of e-mail is almost as common as the use of the telephone — individuals are trained to use the technology. In many cases connection is made available free-of-charge, appliances are provided at low or no cost and training is available for neophyte users. In poor economies, e-mail is yet to make its presence effectively felt, but is increasingly available at community service centres such as libraries and "cyber cafés."
- **Presentational software**: PowerPoint and similar programmes are already commonplace among academics and other professional speakers. While a simple slide presentation requires little skill to develop, increasing the sophistication levels of such a presentation will require higher level training.
- **World Wide Web**: Many on-campus instructors are beginning to use the Web as a presentational tool as part of their lecture notes available to students on call at any time of their own choosing. This vehicle also has the additional advantage of providing access to primary sources of information in most media (print, graphics, photographs, audio and video) through streaming. By using tools like Web-CT or Hyper news, on-line discussions and chat groups can be organised for highly interactive participation in learning. This technology requires good organisational and pedagogical skills to profit from its enormous potential. Faculty training will be essential for this purpose.
- **Multimedia, CD-ROM**: These are very exciting learning tools. Their development costs can be very high, especially those at the very high end which could contain audio and video clips, Internet connections to other databases, large amounts of information and built-in simulation and other enrichments. Putting all these together in a user-friendly package will require

teams of experts (from media producers to content experts) working on the product. The reproduction cost of CD-ROMs is very small if large volumes are "burnt." Consequently, this medium is a consideration only in cases where there are large enrolments to justify the enormous expense. However, there is a strong case for the development of the medium where the course can be used by a consortium of institutions working together. It is possible for such a consortium of distance teaching institutions to come together in the Commonwealth.

A second change that has taken place since COL was established is the pace of globalisation. Services in education have become a matter for discussion both under GATT and its successor, the World Trade Organization (WTO). It is a sector employing some 50 million people with an annual budget of US$1,000 billion.[31] The decision was taken in 1994 to include services in the liberalisation of international trade that previously applied to commodities. The General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS) that was signed in April of that year included education in the list of services to be liberalised. To stay outside the scope of this agreement, a country's education system must be completely financed and administered by the state. This is no longer the case anywhere.

The WTO uses four terms to describe different kinds of cross-border trade in services. In education "consumption abroad" and "cross-border supply of services" are two of those, which have relevance to this discussion.[32] The former refers to students studying in the country where the education is delivered. This is mainly limited to higher education. In 1995, it was a "trade" worth US$27 million.[33] The latter refers to the sale of courses over the postal services, Internet, CD-ROMs and DVD. This is being considered as the fastest-growing trade in educational services. Those speaking in favour of this trade want to give consumers of the service better access to the Internet, deregulate distance learning and harmonise conditions to it. This trade will be open to all sectors, but the WTO report lists many "barriers" that need to be removed before trade in educational services can be liberalised. These include measures "limiting direct investment by foreign education providers" and the "existence of government monopolies and high subsidisation of local institutions."

A third change is that the ever-increasing demand for educational services and goods is making it difficult, if not impossible, for many governments to satisfy the demand, especially in the post-secondary sector. Between 1985 and 1992, the

31. *The WTO and the Millennium Round: What is at stake for Public Education?* (Belgium and France: Education International and Public Services International, 1999).

32. Ibid.

33. Michael Gafney, "Private Universities a Viable Option," *The Globe and Mail*, November 2000.

number of students in higher education rose to about 26% (i.e., from 58.6 million to 73.7 million).[34] Public spending during the same period tended to stagnate at between 4% and 6% of gross domestic product (GDP), the higher figure being that of the developed economies. In view of the dearth of public spending, citizens are increasingly looking to private education for a solution. Traditional public education is also seen not to be flexible enough for the needs of lifelong learners. Under pressure from economic interests, the process of "deregulating" educational systems seems to have begun. The increasing pressure on schools, colleges and universities to generate their own revenue streams is already forcing many of them to look for alternative sources of funding, ranging from sponsorships to full management by private companies. Very aggressively many managers of public institutions and would-be educational entrepreneurs look at the development and spread of ICTs as a way to expand business globally by using distance education, the Internet and the Web. This aggression is not limited to post-secondary education only; primary and secondary education is very much in sight.

Regardless of whether education is delivered to learners on- or off-campus, with or without partnerships, by public or private enterprises, institutions of the Commonwealth can benefit from a knowledgeable and honest broker who has the capacity to track global developments and bring this to the attention of Commonwealth governments and people. This broker should also have at the same time the capacity to identify training needs, acquire or create training products and put in place the infrastructure to moving knowledge across the Commonwealth.

Through its ten years of work with educators and trainers in the Commonwealth, COL has built a network of partners and allies who can be used to support any Commonwealth-wide venture. Rapid communication links, key to any network building, are more or less in place in most Commonwealth institutions. Knowledge of distance education systems is becoming widespread and a greater willingness to share resources, knowledge and products is also beginning to appear. With this in mind, COL can be at the centre of a Commonwealth-wide effort in:

- **Managing knowledge**: The volume of knowledge on education and training has been increasing at a phenomenal speed over the last five years. In this respect, it is not any different to other fields of human endeavour. Keeping up with this growth in knowledge is beyond the capacity of most Commonwealth governments and their institutions, not only because they are short of the

34. "Higher Education in the Twenty-First Century: Vision and Action" (Paris: UNESCO, 1998).

telecommunications infrastructure through which most of this knowledge is moving but also they lack the human resources that needs to be deployed for an effective knowledge management system. COL, through its network both within and outside of the Commonwealth, is in a unique position to commission, gather, store and distribute knowledge of developments in distance education systems, courses, technologies, management and training.

- **Moving knowledge**: While it is important to gather and store knowledge, it is equally important that such knowledge distributed effectively and in time for it to be of much benefit to colleagues across the Commonwealth. Technologies currently available to COL and its clients should enable COL to "push" information to users quickly. The knowledge provided will cover a range of fields both in the practice of distance and open education as well as in specific disciplines. Of special value will be knowledge that is free from copyright restrictions and in a form accessible to those with a minimum level of technological infrastructure.
- **Making knowledge**: The digital storage of knowledge, including courseware, permits agencies like COL to work in partnership with content specialists to develop courses and have them available for use by clients. COL can be instrumental in identifying courseware needs, designing curriculum and transforming that curriculum into learning materials. Such materials can then be made available to Commonwealth institutions for their use as appropriate. COL could also, in some cases, help with strategies to deliver such courses in partnership with national or regional institutions.
- **Mastering knowledge**: For education and training providers to operate in a digitally rich technology environments such as the Web, Internet and multimedia, mastery of a variety of skills will be required. Globally, these skills are in short supply. The Commonwealth's need is as high as the rest of the world; however, the Commonwealth also possesses a large number of people with these skills. COL should be in a position to bring together those who possess the knowledge and those who need the knowledge in training forums and workshops for transfer from one to the other to take place.

To sum up the situation, given the complexity of challenges within which Commonwealth providers of education may have to operate in the two or three decades ahead, it is very likely that continued support from COL will be helpful as it responds to new demands, adjusts to new conditions, prepares for new paradigms, faces international competition and delivers the services that it was all set up to do flexibly, effectively and efficiently.

new directions

We now live in a Global World... capital G, capital W. Imperial fantasies about the Virtual Corporate University of the Universe are rampant. What are we to do? I suggest to you that we should renew and reassert the values of the Commonwealth of Learning, both capital C, capital L and small c, small l.

SIR JOHN DANIEL
Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO
former Vice-Chancellor, The Open University, U.K.[35]

It is most likely that in the next quarter century a few key issues that will preoccupy the minds of educational planners and administrators will also determine the style and state of education in the Commonwealth as, indeed, the world at large. These factors will include, among other things, expansion, equity, access, costs, globalisation, competition, quality, efficiencies, effectiveness and technology. While there may be debate about the relative importance of these various factors depending on the sector of education, the location of where the education is delivered and the prejudices of those participating in the debate, there can no longer be an argument about the importance of learning technologies and their impact on the delivery of education and training. There are many reasons for ascribing this importance to technology. Some of these have been discussed in earlier sections of this paper and others include the following:[36]

- **Death of distance**: The belief that distance is a factor in human communication is dying. There is hope that the cost of communication will not be determined by distance even in the most regulated of environments. Reaching out to students through the electronic highway will be determined more by willingness of the educational providers to utilise the newer technologies than by fear of inaccessibility because of communication costs.
- **Cost of appliances:** Costs will continue to drop even as the computing capacities of such appliances increase. The cost of the networking computers of the future is expected to decrease to the level of present-day televisions, making it possible for most households to own appliances. Where households are too poor to have the appliance, the emergence of tele-learning centres provides some short-term solutions.
- **Location does not matter**: Providers of educational services can be located anywhere on earth and can reach the users of the educational services wherever they may be as long as there is a basic communication infrastructure. Even today, Indian students already have access to, for example, courses from North America without having to be in North America. Similarly, courses from India can and should travel across the globe.
- **The size of the organisation:** Providing the educational service is not relevant; what matters is the quality of the service. Small and specialised organisations can offer their products to large groups and be globally competitive.
- **Content customisation**: Sophisticated pedagogy can facilitate individuals to customise their learning needs. Learning can become either a multi-channel or a mono-channel experience. The final authority on customisation will be the expected learning outcomes of the subject and the learning preference of the student.

35. John Daniel, "Distance Learning in the Era of Networks: What are the Key Technologies?" (paper presented at the first Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning, Brunei Darussalam, 1999).

36. F. Cairncross, *The Death of Distance: How the Communication Revolution Will Change Our Lives* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1997).

- **People as the ultimate scarce resource**: The really difficult challenge for institutions will be to recruit people with the necessary skills to perform the tasks required, as well as to train and retrain those already in service to work in the new environment.
- **Emergence of globally used language**: The emergence of English as a dominant second language of science, technology, business and international relations, as well as education and training, will mean the availability of globally usable knowledge products. There will be an increase in the choice of educational and training courses.
- **Communities of culture can be developed:** The opportunity to make available content in other languages, apart from English, to a larger audience will become feasible. Declining cost and ease of use of communication tools will mean the availability of a vehicle to disseminate other cultures and traditions.

At no other time in history has there been so much ferment in the delivery of education. Technologies, with the power to transform many of our long-held traditions about learning, are enabling those providing education and training to do things differently. At the same time, the same technologies are also helping new players to enter the field. Some recent initiatives, listed below, illustrate the beginnings of some of these new ventures and players:

- **The World Bank**: To further demonstrate that it has indeed become a knowledge bank, the World Bank and members of its group have embraced distance education as a tool in their training arsenal. Called the World Bank Learning Network (WBLN), the bank offers courses under a brand called *Accessnet* from Washington, D.C. Presently, these courses are delivered to bank clients and staff through the Bank's Global Communication Network, which provides interactive video-conferencing and Internet connectivity to over 60 countries with plans to extend it to another 60 in the near future. The courses are said to be designed according to the needs of its clients, with an appropriate mix of media and learning activities. The Bank also runs point-to-point tele-seminars, virtual conferences, interactive discussions, etc. The Bank is also active in organising and developing information data banks, training workshops, etc., as part of its promotion of distance education globally.[37]
- **XSIQ**: Based in Sydney, Australia, this company is running a 24-hour-a-day, seven-days-a-week tutorial, developed specifically for years 11 and 12 New South Wales Secondary School curriculum. It is designed to offer a complete

37. www.worldbank.org/distancelearning

range of educational services, including curriculum-based education materials, tutorials and discussion groups. Its aim is to make students' learning experiences more stimulating, interesting and fun. For example, chemistry students will be able to interact with virtual experiments using multimedia displays and then go on to ask questions of educational professionals. The XSIQ subject matter mirrors what is being studied in the classroom and utilises the latest multimedia and activity development techniques available. On-line chat rooms allow students from the same school or other schools to communicate with each other. The service charges a yearly membership fee of about Aus$75 and a subscription fee of Aus$100 per subject per year. This venture is a partnership between an educational provider and leading technology companies such as 3Com, NEC, etc.[38]

- **Penn State World Campus**: Penn State World Campus hopes to combine and benefit from the two strengths of Pennsylvania's premier land-grant university. These are: (i) that it is one of the leading institutions of higher learning in the USA; and (ii) it has a century-long commitment in "outreach" programmes as well as leadership in the use of technology and, more recently, distance teaching. Courses coming from the World Campus are all Web-based and aimed at learners who are connected, require flexibility in their learning and are able to pay for it. Through its Distance Education Centre, the University also engages itself in work related to the development of the practice of distance education.[39]
- **E-University**: Still in development, Britain's e-University is planning to deliver on-line courses to learners not only in that country but worldwide. It is a partnership between the government and private sector and is expected to interest many of the country's leading conventional universities as partners. The aim is to capture a large part of the global educational market by taking educational products to where users are located.[40]
- **United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR)**: Like many of its counterparts in the United Nations family of organisations, the UNHCR invests a significant part of its resources on staff training and providing education to refugees under difficult circumstances. The UNHCR is collaborating with COL to design and deliver a distance education course with global outreach on better communication. The programme is expected to provide learning resources via pre-packaged materials and tutorial support through on-line help. Expected to be launched by the end of the year, this programme may be a forerunner of many more to come. [41]

38. www.xsiq.com

39. www.worldcampus.psu.edu/pub/index.shtml

40. http://education.guardian.co.uk/higher (story 10 October 2000)

41. *Expanding Learning Horizons: Summary Report 1998-2000* (Vancouver: The Commonwealth of Learning, 2000).

- **United Nations agencies**: Almost all UN agencies are engaged in the use, as well as promotion, of distance and open learning. They are beginning to use distance education in the training of people related to their mission and are promoting distance education as a viable methodology for training and educational purposes.

With the multitude of global activities propelled by the growth of technologies, COL must find a new direction for itself or become redundant as an agency among actors who are better funded and have a broader mandate. This new direction, while taking into account the recommendations of the Briggs and Daniel Committees, must not be limited by them. The new direction for a new decade, while founded within the functions and objectives set forth in the Memorandum of Understanding and which are indeed expressions of Commonwealth expectations of the mid-1980s, ought to be interpreted amidst the realties of a technologically rich period. In the course of the last ten years, COL's Board and staff have developed a clear understanding of the nature of COL's expertise and the ways in which its contributions can be significant. It is an understanding that has come from reflecting on the many things that COL has been asked to do, its reasons for doing some of them and not others, and what it is that COL is actually doing in the various programmes and projects that it is actively engaged in. In its review of COL's work, the Progress Review Committee concluded that "in sum, COL is a pioneering effort, and its leadership has to perform the jobs of architect, designer and builder as well as teacher, consultant and diplomat."[42] One could add "fund raiser" to the list. As COL ponders the strategies and directions for the next ten years, a few considerations come to mind:

- **Conceptualising activities**: Every proposal that is a candidate for some action by COL has to be conceptualised. The questions that are put to COL are typically those that may not have a ready-made solution. This, of course, was the main reason why COL was created. Even if solutions existed to the questions about distance education, there would have been a compelling case and value for having an agency like COL that could actually identify the availability of those solutions and apply them to the new enquiry. This is another way of saying that from the very beginning, COL has been working on development frontiers where the possibilities of distance and open learning, technologies of various kinds and the specific circumstances of 54 countries come together. Typically, COL staff and the consultants who assist them, and the people in the regions, countries and institutions, begin with the questions raised and an almost blank sheet of paper. The way they conceptualise the

42. *Report of the Progress Review Committee* (Vancouver: The Commonwealth of Learning, 1994).

issues facing them and devise strategies that are intended to provide solutions then determines everything that follows. This way of determining COL's interventions has worked well in the past and there is every reason to believe that it will do so in the future as well.

- **Alliances and partnerships**: In terms of its day-to-day activities and working relationships, the fostering and cementing of strategic alliances are of first importance. There are three main reasons why this must be so:
  - First, when COL was created, there were already many distance education institutions in the Commonwealth and other countries. Those numbers have increased today. It is therefore obviously important that COL should seek to work co-operatively with them in the pursuit of common objectives. The objective, furthermore, is for COL to complement and not compete with such institutions. While it is not one of COL's functions to provide programmes of distance education, increasingly the pressure to get involved in this act is getting greater. Under such circumstances, COL will seek to develop such programmes with and through existing providers.
  - Second, the current state-of-the-art in distance education makes it imperative that COL develops close working relationships with national educational administrations and with national, regional and international development assistance agencies. COL's first decade has coincided with — and has been part of — the global discovery of open learning and distance education as an effective alternative method of tackling massive education and training challenges. Its second decade can be expected to confirm this as well as see an expanded role for distance and open learning. By working closely with other agencies, COL can use its specialised knowledge of distance education to develop ideas to the point where other agencies can either share in or take responsibility for funding further development and implementation of distance education initiatives.
  - Third, new kinds of working relationships have to be fostered between the very different cultures of education, technology and telecommunications. A main reason for creating COL was "to create and widen access to opportunities for learning...by the application of communication technologies to education." For educationists and communication technologists, this opens up new and problematic fields of interest. Typically, however, educationists are consumers of the products of computer and communications technology. Instead of being able to propose the educational requirements for which

appropriate technology would then be developed, they are usually encouraged to adapt existing items of technology to their educational purposes. It is in this context that COL is unique among international agencies, not only because it asks educational questions but because its core professional staff includes people with expertise in technology and telecommunications as well as education and training

- **Model building**: In its operating responses, COL has to resolve the inner contradictions between its mission and its means. It must be responsive to the very different expectations of 54 Commonwealth countries through the energies and talents of a small core of professional staff. COL's way of squaring this circle is to select projects which in their development and when in operation can be regarded as models of good practice. Distance education has to be thought of in relation to the technologies it comprises and the complex system within which it operates. The components of a successful project, the processes by which it is developed and the expertise and training that will be needed for its effective operation can all be brought together in such models. These models then become exemplary not as prescriptions but as practical demonstrations of the factors to be taken into account and their inter-relations in the making of workable solutions.
- **Brokering**: One of the strengths of international agencies is their ability to take initiatives that individual countries may not be able to take for themselves. In Commonwealth settings, where the vast majority of members are developing countries, many are small, and all are hard pressed financially and lack an adequate supply of expert knowledge. Commonwealth agencies obviously have an important role to play in this respect, particularly in matters of access to information, course materials, intellectual property ownership and the negotiation of purchase agreements and rights to publish and use. This is becoming a difficult and challenging task, but COL needs to make continuous efforts in this role.
- **Commissioning**: For an agency like COL, the ability to commission is of strategic importance. The subjects to be commissioned for creation should not be limited to matters relating to distance and open learning, but given the high cost of transferring intellectual property rights (IPRs), should also include discipline-related products. The advent of digital technologies now makes it possible to create generic learning materials for global use and yet allow enough latitude for local adaptation. COL needs to embark on this venture in a significant way.
- **Networking**: Effective co-operation calls for a multiplicity of networking arrangements. In international arenas, this means much more than simply

having good contacts and effective ways of keeping in touch with them. International agencies create their own networks and join with others because they have something to offer that others do not have, or do not have in quite the same way. COL's unique contribution until now has been its knowledge and expertise in open learning and distance education and the access it can give to the knowledge and others in these specialised fields in the Commonwealth and other countries. As we move forward, COL's networking strategies could take several forms. It could build links with Commonwealth governments and the numerous Commonwealth education and training agencies, as well as with all major development agencies. These links could lead directly to the development and delivery of training and learning projects. COL has been instrumental in helping set up a number of distance education professional associations in the Commonwealth. These links need further strengthening. The telecommunication links and infrastructure it is developing will enable it to facilitate a whole range of continuous professional development activities in a wide range of fields.

- **Advocacy**: A very definite signal of the importance that Commonwealth governments are giving to distance education is reflected in the range of projects COL has undertaken and is undertaking in association with government institutions and development assistance agencies. Through its advocacy, COL has actively encouraged this diversification and has helped to give definition and leadership to it through its commissioning and network activities. Distance education has come to the centre stage in national and international discussions on education and training policies. Furthermore, the practice of distance education is itself the subject of continuing change and debate, particularly in response to innovations in information and communications technology. One of COL's continuing roles is thus to be an informed advocate of the uses to which distance education in its various forms can be put as well as to assist them through appropriate means by which this might be done in the whole range of education and training.

It is worth recalling that the first steps towards a Commonwealth initiative in open learning and distance education were associated with the possibility of establishing an "open university for the Commonwealth." This was part of the challenge in the early 1980s when many developing countries found that, as a result of changes of policy in the developed countries, their students no longer had the same access to university study in other Commonwealth countries. This was an important part of the background to the Briggs' Committee. The recommendations by the Briggs and Daniel Committees took a much broader view of the matter. They argued that the overriding objective must be

to strengthen member countries' capacities to develop the human resources required for their economic and social development. That was the objective set for COL in the Memorandum of Understanding and is the rubric under which it operates.

Commonwealth countries have themselves been responding to the possibilities of using distance and open learning in an increasing range of sectors. This means, in the past, the nature of COL's work differed markedly from one sector of activity to another. In the university and teacher education sectors, for example, where distance education approaches were already in use, there were existing bodies of experience and knowledge that COL could draw on when developing its own responses. But in fields like technical and vocational education and training, the situation was very different. Until quite recently, there was a widely held belief that trade and other forms of vocational training could not be taught effectively through open learning. COL's task in such a circumstance was to search for and bring together available experience in the field and, on the basis of lessons learned, devise programmes and initiatives aimed at spreading the application of open learning to tech/voc education. In higher and tertiary education, the position was much the same with perhaps placing more emphasis on continuing and professional education. As we look ahead, in as far as sectoral focus is concerned, COL may wish to continue its focus on teacher education, tech/voc education, continuing professional education and add pre-tertiary, non-formal basic and secondary education with special attention given to marginalised and out-of-school youth and adults.

COL was set up by Commonwealth governments in response to a number of concerns relating to education and training. If anything, within the first ten years of its existence, these concerns have not diminished but increased both in terms of its complexity and urgency. As a small agency, it has an enormous capacity to be agile and innovative, to change directions quickly and to do all of these within the context of its original mission, that is, *"to [enable] any learner anywhere in the Commonwealth...to study any distance teaching programme available from any bona fide college or university in the Commonwealth."*[43] While the environment in which COL has been operating over the last ten years has changed dramatically, the change has not been one that is inhibitory to its role in Commonwealth education and delivery. On the contrary, the new environment is one that both empowers and enables COL to bring a greater purpose to its mission. That mission is achievable.

43. Asa Briggs in *Towards a Commonwealth of Learning, Report of the Expert Group on Commonwealth Co-operation in Distance Education and Open Learning* (London: Commonwealth Secretariat, 1987).

But while funding and enthusiasm for technology... is crucial, education is the only sure-fire strategy for the Internet age....In the long term, education will be the key differentiator for all economies around the world.

— Mr. John Chambers, President and CEO, CISCO Systems[44]

In whatever way we look at it, education and training is at the heart of any serious development of citizens, for economic development, participatory citizenship, protection of rights, safety of families, conflict resolution, poverty alleviation, wellness and well being of the individual. The call for more education is clear and Commonwealth Heads of Government, at their recent meeting in Durban (CHOGM), echoed that sentiment. For many who are engaged in the business of delivering education there is recognition that:

- **Learning in the future** will become the essential part of everyday human activity.
- **Access to learning in the future** will need to become as near universal as possible.
- **Learning providers of the future** will need to respond flexibly to learner needs.
- **Learning suppliers of the future** will need to adapt their ways to meet the changing demands of their clients and to maximise the potential of new delivery techniques.
- **Governments of the future** will need to play an active role in supporting the learning infrastructure, but should not attempt to control the learning agenda.
- **Learning organisations of the future** will need to be collaborative enterprises.

As an organisation that must have the future in sight in everything it does, COL, in order to be relevant, must respond to its clients' needs as they strategise to make their own responses. The original recommendation of the Briggs Report for Commonwealth governments to fund COL up to £5.0 million is not a lot of money; the £2.4 million recommended by the Daniel Committee is even less. While resources have been shrinking, demand for COL's services have been on the increase. It is with this kind of dilemma that the Board and all those interested in COL must ask those difficult questions about its future.

In the four tasks (i.e., as a partner in capacity-building, a catalyst for collaboration, an agent for training in distance education and a provider of

44. J. Chambers, quoted in "Asia's Race to Go Digital," *Far Eastern Economic Review* (Hong Kong: 1 July 1999).

knowledge on all matters pertaining to distance and open learning, as well as the learning technologies supporting these initiatives) COL's vision of the future is to be not only supportive of national and institutional agendas, but also to add value to their planning and undertakings by working with them in developing models, organising trials, designing good practice and building networks of one kind or another from collaborative course development to organising accreditation. How far COL can go in these directions will depend on how serious Commonwealth governments that support COL and the Board that governs it wishes it to go. Those who are familiar with education in the Commonwealth know that there is work to be done, and those who are familiar with COL know that it can help in that work.

AKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Commonwealth of Learning wishes to acknowledge with enormous gratitude the countless numbers of contributions by governments, institutions and individuals who have helped to transform a vision into a reality.

APPENDIX
publications

A wide range of studies, reports and research documents have been published by The Commonwealth of Learning. Many are available on COL's web site. Major publications are listed here.

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1. COL ADMINISTRATION DOCUMENTS

1.4 *Strategic Planning Document 1990 – 1993.* August 1991.

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1.5 *Memorandum of Understanding on The Commonwealth of Learning* as agreed by Commonwealth Governments on September 1, 1988 and as amended on October 31, 1995

1.6 *Strategic Outlook 1995 – 1998.* November 1994

1.7 Professional Staff Biographies (continually updated)

1.8 *Three-year Plan 1997 – 2000.* July 1997

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2.17 *Teacher Training by Distance in Jamaica.* Sally Haag and Jennifer O'Rourke, University of Waterloo, Canada. February 1991.

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2.25 *Administrative Structures for Distance Education.* Hilary Perraton, Commonwealth Secretariat, England and The Commonwealth of Learning. 1991.

2.26 *Radio as an Educational Medium in the Commonwealth Caribbean.* Rovin Deodat, Simon Fraser University, Canada. June 1992.

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2.29 *Mathematics for All - Phase I: Search and Planning.* Dr. Kenneth Hardy, Carleton University, Canada. June 1992.

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2.42 *Library Services to Distance Learners in the Commonwealth.* Edited by Elizabeth Watson and Neela Jagannathan. Case studies cover institutions in both developed and developing countries located in Africa, Australia, Britain, Canada, the Caribbean, India, and New Zealand. 1997.

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2.44 *Practices and Resources in Distance Education: Pacific Islands (with particular reference to pre-tertiary education) and the Commonwealth Asia/Pacific Distance Education Network (CAPDEN).* A report for The Commonwealth of Learning and The University of the South Pacific. Dr. Claire Matthewson, Dunedin, New Zealand. March 1996.

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2.49 *Survey of current status of distance education in Cameroon*. Professor N.K. Pecku. February 1998

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2.52 *Knowledge Management Roundtable, report and proposals for action*. Dr. Keith Harry (facilitator). December 1999

2.53 *The use of Public Broadcasting in the Caribbean for Open/Distance Learning: Feasibility study report*. Betty Mitchell and Krishnapillai Murugan. May 2000

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5.1 *Directory of Women's Studies in India.* Association of Indian Universities and COL. 1991.

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5.4.2 *Directory of Courses Available by Distance: Volume I — Teacher Education, 2nd Edition (Part I — pages 1 - 338; Part II — pages 339 - 719).* October 1992.

5.4.3 *Directory of Courses Available by Distance: Volume II — Technical/Vocational Education.* 1993.

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5.6 *Directory of Continuing Legal Education.* 1992.

5.7 *Colleges Reaching Out: Report on the Status of Distance Education in Canadian Colleges and Technical Institutes.* 1994.

5.8 *A Directory of Experts: Open Universities in South Asia.* 1994.

6. DOCUMENTS REPORTING ON COL ACTIVITIES

6.1 *The Commonwealth of Learning Annual* and *Summary Reports*

6.2 *News Publications of The Commonwealth of Learning*
COMLEARN (1990 - 1995)
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EdTech News (1997 -)
EduCommAsia (1995 -), Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia

6.3 *A Compendium of Activities, September 1994.* 1994.

6.4 *COL in the Caribbean.* January 1995.

7. & 8. BROCHURES

Note: Sections 7. and 8. contain several brochures and promotional material that have been produced over the years.

9. MANUALS, CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES AND COURSE BOOKS

9.1 *User Manual: Student Record Management System*. 1993.

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9.2 *Training System for Educational Audio Teleconferencing in Distance Education: Module 1 — Using the AGS System: Module 2 — Using the Teleconference Bridge: Module 3 — audio and audio-graphic teaching: Module 4 — a computer-assisted learning package*. 1992, 1993 and 1994.

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9.4 *Water Safe: An Introduction to Water Quality Issues*. 1994.

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9.9 *Statistics and Indicators on Women in the Pacific Islands: Pre-Workshop Resources*. Prepared by The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand (TOPNZ). INSTRAW/The Commonwealth of Learning, 1992.

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An Introduction to Open and Distance Learning
A Glossary of Open and Distance Learning Terms

*Designing Materials for Open and Distance Learning**

*Planning & Management of Open and Distance Learning**

*Use and Integration of Media in Open and Distance Learning**

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* published with funding from the Asian Development Bank's Training for Capacity Building in Distance Education for Primary Teacher Training programme.

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The use of multi media in distance education. November 2000

Managing for electronic networking. November 2000

Designing online learning. November 2001

Using telecentres in support of distance education. November 2001

Using community radio for non-formal education. November 2001

Analysing costs/benefits for distance education programmes. November 2001

Video/video-conferencing in support of distance education. November 2001

Audio/audioconferencing in support of distance education. November 2001

9.13 *A Course on Writing Effectively for UNHCR*. Maree Bentley and David Murphy. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees/The Commonwealth of Learning, November 2000.

9.14 *Audio for Distance Education and Open Learning: A Practical Guide for Planners and Producers*. Written by John Thomas. The Commonwealth of Learning/ International Extension College, U.K., 2001.

10. CALENDAR

Calendar 1993 (Mathematics Theme). Dr. Kenneth Hardy, Mathematics Department, Carleton University, Canada. 1992

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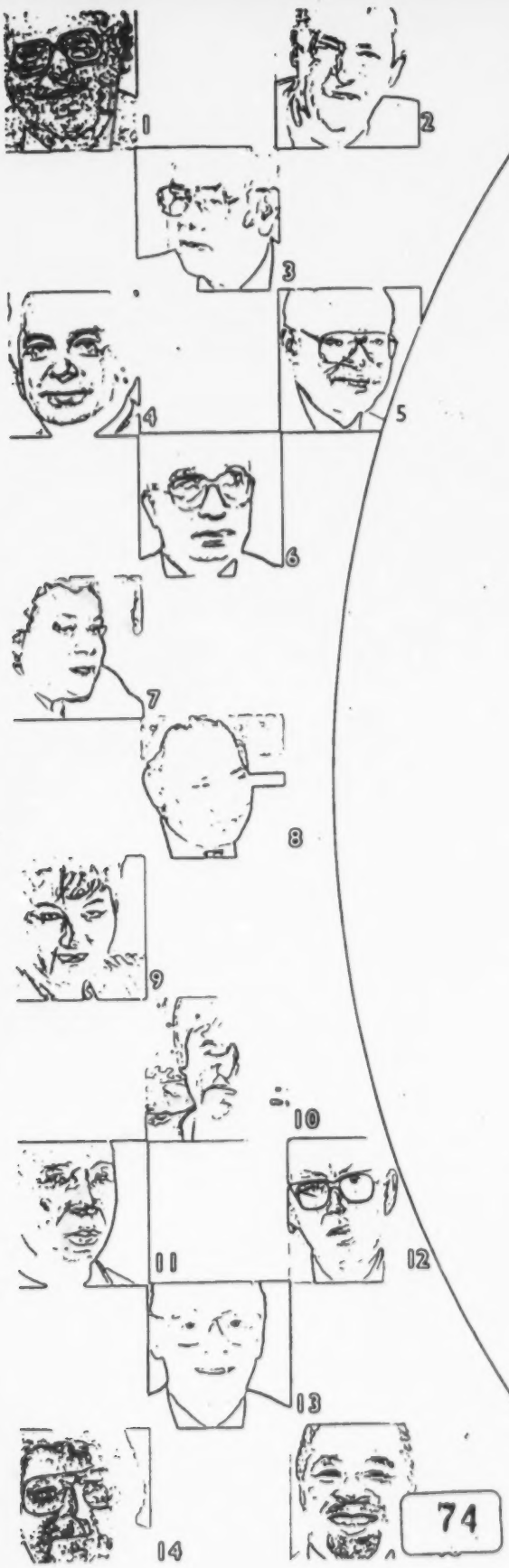

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2. Sir John Daniel, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR-GENERAL FOR EDUCATION, UNESCO, FORMER VICE-CHANCELLOR, THE OPEN UNIVERSITY, U.K., AND CHAIR OF THE WORKING GROUP, APPOINTED IN 1988 TO DEVELOP INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR COMMONWEALTH CO-OPERATION IN DISTANCE EDUCATION, WHICH RECOMMENDED THE CREATION OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF LEARNING – THE "DANIEL REPORT"
3. Professor James A. Maraj, FOUNDING PRESIDENT OF COL (1989–1995) (DEC'D)
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9. Ms. Marion Croft, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT, LAURENTIAN UNIVERSITY, CANADA, AND EARLY COL CONSULTANT
10. Ms. Janet Jenkins, OPEN LEARNING AND DISTANCE EDUCATION CONSULTANT, FORMER DIRECTOR OF INTERNATIONAL EXTENSION COLLEGE (1983–1990) AND EARLY COL STAFF MEMBER
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13. Dr. H. Ian Macdonald, O.C., PRESIDENT EMERITUS, YORK UNIVERSITY, CANADA, CHAIRMAN OF COL'S BOARD OF GOVERNORS (FROM 1994) AND CHAIR OF THE 1993 PROGRESS REVIEW OF COL.
14. Mr. Don Hamilton, FOUNDING VICE-CHAIRMAN OF COL'S BOARD OF GOVERNORS (CANADA)
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